THE
ANCHOR
YALE
BIBLE

EZEKIEL 38–48

A NEW TRANSLATION
WITH
INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY

STEPHEN L. COOK

Ezekiel
38–48

YALE

VOLUME 22B

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John J. Collins
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Preface

Back at Yale University in my graduate school days, I was privileged to take a seminar on Ezekiel in the late 1980s with Moshe Greenberg, who was a visiting professor in New Haven. His seminar was unforgettable and one of the highlights among a considerable number of profoundly special courses I enjoyed at Yale. My friend and former colleague Ellen F. Davis, who now teaches Hebrew Bible at Duke University, was also in that small class with Professor Greenberg. Never would I have guessed at that juncture that I would someday have the privilege of researching and writing the third and final volume in the series of Anchor Yale Bible commentaries on Ezekiel that Greenberg carried through to the end of Ezekiel 37. Although I cannot fill Greenberg's shoes, I do feel kinship with him in several of his emphases. First, although I am more interested in the book of Ezekiel's history of composition than was Greenberg, I agree with him that the interpreter of this prophecy must start with the received, canonical form of the book, with all its holistic richness. That form is what in fact lies before today's interpreter, and it constitutes the actual working Scripture of the great Jewish and Christian interpreters of the prophecy through the centuries up until the rise of modernism. As I explain below, I have found it neither defensible nor practicable in this commentary to pursue any focused effort at reconstructing complex editorial layers in Ezekiel's redaction history. Second, with Greenberg, I assume that excellent interpretation of Ezekiel must entail intimate acquaintance with the book's core source materials, its particular patterns of composition and rhetoric, and the general learned, priestly workings of the Ezekiel school. Third, I have tried to honor Greenberg's work in the first two Anchor Yale Bible volumes on Ezekiel by including plenty of insights from traditional premodern Jewish commentators, such as Rashi, Radak, and Eliezer of Beaugency.

While honoring Greenberg's legacy, I have also tried to push beyond Greenberg's approach to Ezekiel in several key respects. In introducing the utopian vision of Ezekiel 40–48, Greenberg shared with us a drawing that a student of his had made of one of the utopian temple's gate towers. In that moment, he persuaded me of the great exegetical

and theological payoff of *visualizing* the text's architectural details. I doubt Greenberg could have imagined, however, the power for interpreting Ezekiel 40–48 that is now available in three-dimensional, virtual models of the utopian temple. At many points the present commentary corrects previous misconceptions about the utopian vision through simple interaction with computer-aided visualizations. Furthermore, although Greenberg (and, indeed, premodern Jewish scholars) were familiar with Ezekiel's dependence on the Holiness Code in Leviticus, his commentaries do not reflect more recent understandings of an entire source running through the Pentateuch known as the "H" source, or what Israel Knohl calls "HS," the Holiness School. Neither does he elaborate on the common *Zadokite* authorship of HS and Ezekiel. Indeed, in researching this commentary I was puzzled to discover that even Greenberg's friend Jacob Milgrom, who has been a significant contributor to our new understandings of HS, does *not* develop Ezekiel's theological kinship with HS in his recent (2012) commentary on Ezekiel 38–48. Milgrom also has no feel for the shared Zadokite authorship of HS and Ezekiel and, in fact, lumps Zadokite and Aaronide priests together! It is in the opposite move of striving toward social-scientific precision in understanding the Israelite priesthood that the present commentary gains new traction in illuminating Ezekiel's prophecy. Finally, although Greenberg was well familiar with Ezekiel's anthropomorphic mode of speaking about God, his commentaries did not develop the significance of this in connection with the anthropomorphic theology of HS (see Israel Knohl) and the Zadokite idea of a terrestrial "body" of God (see Benjamin Sommer). The present commentary works hard to connect these dots and in so doing pushes to clarify a great deal of Ezekiel's text.

Acknowledgments

For the great honor of writing an Anchor Yale Bible commentary and for their constant support and patience, I thank the members of the AYB editorial board, including John J. Collins, general editor; Saul M. Olyan; and Susan Ackerman. Saul Olyan thoroughly edited the final version of my manuscript, greatly improving it. I am profoundly grateful. At Yale University Press, I wish to acknowledge Heather Gold, who oversees the entire Anchor Yale Bible series; Susan Laity, senior manuscript editor; and Jessie Dolch, the actual copy editor, whose tireless, detailed work perfected the manuscript. My fascination with the book of Ezekiel has been long-lived, and many teachers, colleagues, and students have helped me over time to better understand these unique prophetic texts. Back at Trinity College (in Connecticut) in the early 1980s my advisor and mentor Dr. John Andrew Gettier helped me translate and interpret selected texts of Ezekiel. I remember in particular John's moving encouragement of me with regard to an annotated translation and study I did of Ezekiel 28. At that time, we joked that I appeared to enjoy working like an Anchor Bible commentator! John's excellent, rigorous Hebrew instruction in college gave me the running start I needed to arrive at a point decades later of mounting the courage to tackle the most formidable Hebrew of Ezekiel 40–48. Later at Yale, I studied Ezekiel not only with Moshe Greenberg but also with Robert R. Wilson, who eventually directed my dissertation, which included a major section on Ezekiel 38–39. I would never have even begun to understand the significant differences between a Zadokite priest, an Aaronide priest, and a Levite without Robert Wilson's training. This commentary is deeply indebted throughout its pages to Bob's social-scientific acumen and exegetical brilliance. Others writing Yale dissertations on Ezekiel during that era included Ellen F. Davis and Corrine Carvalho, both of whose work has profoundly helped me. Corri's dissertation specifically treats Ezekiel 40–48, and I cite it frequently in the present volume. In fact, as I began work on this commentary, Robert Wilson mentioned to me privately that he believes Corri's work to

have made the most headway thus far into the utopian temple vision and that I must be sure to mine it.

Because of my deep interests in Ezekiel, I have long enjoyed the papers and discussions of the SBL Theological Perspectives on the Book of Ezekiel section, of which I am currently cochair. I am profoundly indebted to the continuing active participants in this section of our guild for their suggestions, feedback, and criticism of my work. Steven S. Tuell and John Strong have become particularly close colleagues and personal friends, and this commentary is greatly indebted to them both. At the risk of omitting someone, others in the section I wish to thank include my cochair, Madhavi Nevader, and Dalit Rom-Shiloni, Paul Joyce, William Tooman, Daniel I. Block, Margaret Odell, Marvin Sweeney, Andrew Mein, Michael Lyons, Casey Strine, Soo J. Kim, Katheryn Pfisterer Darr, Michael Konkel, Penny Barter, Tyler Mayfield, Jonathan Stökl, Corrine Carvalho, Lydia Lee, and Daniel Bodi. Although not regular participants, close colleagues such as Nathan MacDonald and James Watts have helped me through delivering occasional presentations in the section. Longtime section member Daniel I. Block served as one of the two external readers of this volume, and I owe him special thanks. His praise was highly encouraging and his suggestions immensely valuable. Dan's work on Ezekiel sets a standard of excellence, and the manner in which I use him as a foil for several of my new interpretations does not do justice to how much we share in common in understanding Ezekiel's book. His commentaries and many writings on Ezekiel have played a major role in the formation of my own views. One indicator of how much our respective views align is my ample use of the New Living Translation (NLT) and frequent approval of its renderings. Dan had a primary hand in the NLT translation of Ezekiel, which represents a great advance in clarifying Ezekiel's meaning.

For two years, William Tooman and Penny Barter organized a series of intensive sessions on Ezekiel ("Current Debates and Future Directions") at the international SBL meetings in St. Andrews, Scotland (2013), and Vienna, Austria (2014). I am very grateful to the organizers for inviting me to deliver papers at both of these conferences. The talks that I heard and the feedback I received on my own work were invaluable in preparing this commentary. In addition to many of the scholars named above who were present at St. Andrews and Vienna, additional colleagues to whom I am grateful for presentations and conversation at these international sessions include Baruch Schwartz, Jacqueline Lapsley, Anja Klein, Christophe Nihan, Frank Hossfeld, Ingrid Lilly, Franz Sedlmeier, Mark Elliott, Tobias Häner, Thomas Krueger, and K.-F. Pohlmann. My attendance at these meetings was greatly facilitated by a 2012–2013 Conant Fund Grant from the Episcopal Church, for which I am extremely grateful.

Back at my home institution, Virginia Theological Seminary, I am especially grateful to our vice president of academic affairs and Hebrew Bible scholar Melody Knowles for convening a Meade Seminar around my Anchor Yale Bible research, hosting us in her home on multiple evenings. These dinner and discussion meetings allowed me to vet key drafts of my work and offered invaluable critique and insight from both biblical scholars and those from other fields within theology and religion. Besides Melody and myself, the Meade Seminar members included Judy Fentress-Williams (Hebrew Bible), Stephen D. Ryan, O.P. (Hebrew Bible), Katherine Sonderegger (systematic theology), Ian Markham (systematic theology), and John Y.-H. Yieh (New Testament). Elizabeth Bentrup was instrumental in organizing the meetings.

For granting me a sabbatical devoted to this project in the spring of 2014–2015, I thank Virginia Theological Seminary; our dean and president, the Very Reverend Ian S. Markham; Vice President Melody Knowles; and our trustees. As I researched this commentary, I learned a great deal from my seminary students, including Curtis L. Dubay, who wrote a master's thesis on key holiness concepts in Ezekiel. Also, I especially thank upper-level students in VTS seminars I taught on Ezekiel, including Steven Balke Jr., Maxine Barnett, Sarah Cardwell, Joyce Cunningham, Catharine Gibson, Diana Gustafson, Annie Hall, Fares Naoum, José Reyes, Susan Sevier, Marianne Allison, Kyle Babin, Maryel Giron, Kevin Laskowski, Erin Rath, James Rickenbaker, Jason Roberson, and Michael Sahdev. As in all of my research and publication projects, the staff at our seminary library met all my bibliographic needs with their legendary grace and efficiency, and I thank them, including head librarian and faculty colleague, Dr. Mitzi Jarrett Budde.

I realized early on in my study of the utopian vision that to understand this text, I would have to create or procure many new visual models, graphics, and renderings of Ezekiel's new sanctuary complex and new holy land. Fortunately, a range of new, affordable software, including iOS apps, became available to help me just as the project gained steam. In addition, talented artists, technical experts, and photographers have been very generous in granting me permission to study and reuse their work, including Michael Di Maggio, whose talent and generosity have really moved me. I also offer my most hearty thanks to Bill Nelson, Ted Larson, Laura Fabrycky, and Margaret Wohler. Margaret Wohler should have her name on my commentary's cover for her many meetings with me, in which we brainstormed all manner of details of the utopian temple and imagined together how ancient iconography might best be reconstructed and illustrated. When, because of her professional talent, she could easily have been drawing more illustrations for the Smithsonian, Margaret chose instead to collaborate with me in understanding Ezekiel 38–48, settling for honoraria that a humble seminary professor could afford. To Margaret, and to all those named and unnamed who have been so generous to me, I offer my deep gratitude.

I dedicate this commentary to my wife of thirty years, Catherine E. Cook. I cannot imagine life without her.

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Abbreviations

HS	The document or strand of the Pentateuch written by the Holiness School (also called the "H" source)
KTU	*Die keilalphabetischen Texte aus Ugarit.* Edited by Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013. 3rd enl. ed. of *KTU: The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani, and Other Places.* Edited by Manfried Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 1995 (= *CTU*)
P	Priestly strand of the Pentateuch
PT	Priestly Torah strand of the Pentateuch

Secondary Sources

ANEP	*The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by James B. Pritchard. 2nd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994
ANET	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.* Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969
AP	*Aramaic Papyri of the Fifth Century B.C.* Edited by Arthur E. Cowley. Oxford: Clarendon, 1923
ARAB	*Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylonia.* Daniel David Luckenbill. 2 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926–1927. Repr., New York: Greenwood, 1968

ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
ATD	Das Alte Testament Deutsch
AYB	Anchor Yale Bible
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BBB	Bonner biblische Beiträge
BDB	Brown, Francis, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
BETL	Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
BHS	*Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia.* Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1983
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBQ	*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
CD	*Church Dogmatics* by Karl Barth. Translated and edited by G. W. Bromiley, T. F. Torrance, and G. T. Thompson. 14 vols. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1956–1975. Standard citation format references volume number, number of part of the volume, and section and page number.
COS	*The Context of Scripture.* Edited by William W. Hallo. 3 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1997–2002
CW	*Collected Works* of C. G. (Carl Gustav) Jung. Edited by Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, and Gerhard Adler. Bollingen series 20. 20 vols. New York: Pantheon, 1953
FAT	Forschungen zum Alten Testament
FOTL	Forms of the Old Testament Literature
GKC	*Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar.* Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by A. E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910
HALOT	*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament.* Ludwig Koehler, Walter Baumgartner, and Johann J. Stamm. Translated and edited under the supervision of Mervyn E. J. Richardson. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–1999
HAT	Handbuch zum Alten Testament
HSM	Harvard Semitic Monographs
IB	*Interpreter's Bible.* Edited by George A. Buttrick et al. 12 vols. New York, 1951–1957
IBHS	*An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax.* Bruce K. Waltke and Michael O'Connor. Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990

JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
Joüon	Joüon, Paul. *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew.* Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. 2 vols. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1991
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JSPSup	Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha Supplement Series
KBL	Koehler, Ludwig, and Walter Baumgartner. *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti libros.* 2nd ed. Leiden: Brill, 1958
LHBOTS	The Library of Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies
NDERF	Stories collected at the Near Death Experience Research Foundation, http://www.nderf.org/index.htm
NIB	*The New Interpreter's Bible.* Edited by Leander E. Keck. 12 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994–2004
NIBCOT	New International Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
NICOT	New International Commentary on the Old Testament
OTL	Old Testament Library
OtSt	Oudtestamentische Studiën
PTMS	Princeton Theological Monograph Series
RB	*Revue biblique*
SBLStBL	Society of Biblical Literature Studies in Biblical Literature
SBLSymS	Society of Biblical Literature Symposium Series
SCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies
StBibLit	Studies in Biblical Literature (Lang)
TOTC	Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
UCOP	University of Cambridge Oriental Publications
UT	*Ugaritic Textbook.* Cyrus H. Gordon. *Analecta Orientalia* 38. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965
VT	*Vetus Testamentum*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WMANT	Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament

WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
ZAW	*Zeitschrift fur die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Textual Witnesses

LXX	Septuagint
MT	Masoretic Text

Greek and Latin Authors

Ambrose		
	Fid.	*De fide*
Augustine		
	Civ.	*The City of God (De civitate Dei)*
	Conf.	*Confessions*
Herodotus		
	Hist.	*Histories (Historiae)*
Josephus		
	Ant.	*Jewish Antiquities*
Plato		
	Phaed.	*Phaedo*
Theodoret of Cyrus		
	Ezech.	Commentary on the Prophet Ezekiel

Traditional Jewish Texts and Scholars

Abarbanel	Don Isaac Abarbanel (Abravanel). Iberian Peninsula-Italy, 1437–1508
b. ʿArak.	Babylonian Talmud: Tractate ʿArakin
b. Ber.	Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Berakot
b. Sanh.	Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Sanhedrin
Eliezer of Beaugency	Jewish French exegete, Northern France, twelfth century CE
Ibn Ezra	Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, 1089–1167, Spanish-born biblical scholar and philosopher
Malbim	Acronym of Rabbi Meïr Loeb ben Jehiel Michel Wisser, Eastern Central Europe, 1809–1879
Meṣudat David	One part of a two-tiered Bible commentary by David and Jeḥiel (son of David) Altschuler, Galicia, Eastern Europe, eighteenth century CE

m. Mid.	Mishnah: Tractate Middot
m. Yoma	Mishnah: Tractate Yoma
m. Zebaḥ	Mishnah: Tractate Zebaḥim
Radak	Acronym of Rabbi David Kimhi (Kimḥi), Provence, southern France, ca. 1160–1235
Ramban	Acronym of Nahmanides, Catalonia, Spain, 1194–1270
Rashbam	Acronym of Rabbi Samuel ben Meir, Troyes, northern France, ca. 1085–1158, grandson of Rashi
Rashbi	Acronym of Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai, second century CE, Tannaitic sage, Israel, disciple of Rabbi Akiva
Rashi	Acronym of Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, Troyes, northern France, 1040–1105

Modern English Bible Translations

ASV	American Standard Version (Thomas Nelson)
BBE	Bible in Basic English (S. H. Hooke, 1949)
CEB	Common English Bible (Abingdon)
CEV	Contemporary English Version (American Bible Society)
CJB	Complete Jewish Bible (Lederer Foundation)
ESV	English Standard Version (Crossway)
GNT	Good News Translation (American Bible Society)
KJV	King James Version (The Queen's Printer, Cambridge University Press)
LITV	Green's Literal Translation of the Bible (Sovereign Grace Publishers)
MESSAGE	The Message (Eugene Peterson)
NABR	New American Bible, Revised (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine)
NASB	New American Standard Bible (Lockman)
NEB	New English Bible (Oxford University Press)
NET	New English Translation (Bible.org)
NETS	*A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (Oxford University Press)
NIV	New International Version (Zondervan)
NJB	New Jerusalem Bible (Darton, Longman, & Todd, and Doubleday)
NJPS	Tanakh (Jewish Publication Society)

NKJV	New Kings James Version (Thomas Nelson)
NLT	New Living Translation (Tyndale)
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version (National Council of the Churches of Christ)
REB	Revised English Bible (Oxford University Press)
RSV	Revised Standard Version (National Council of the Churches of Christ)
VOICE	The Voice Bible (Thomas Nelson)
YLT	Young's Literal Translation (1898; Public Domain)

INTRODUCTION

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I.

The Literary Character of Ezekiel 38–48

The concluding chapters of the book of Ezekiel treated in this commentary represent complex inscribed prophecy. As with the earlier prophetic texts of Ezekiel's book, and unlike much preexilic, originally oral prophecy, this material is fundamentally literary in character. In a recent study, Evans (2006, 4) considers that there is no substantial preliterary, oral prophecy in Ezekiel's book. Consequently, as Davis (1989, 16) earlier noted, Zimmerli's form-critical methodology, which one might have expected to probe into originally oral settings, rightly traces the history of the book's composition as a purely literary process.

Ezekiel's written prophecy brims with sophisticated intertextual echoes of preceding scriptural material. Ezekiel 38–48 specifically draws on earlier prophetic literature and on priestly Holiness School (HS) Scriptures, often startling the reader with its seamless interweaving of priestly and visionary features. The recurrent evidence of inner-biblical interpretation within these chapters includes a reinterpretation of Isaiah 14 in Ezekiel 38–39, which envisions God's destruction of a great northern foe in "my land" (Isa 14:25, Ezek 38:16), specifically upon God's "mountains" (Isa 14:25; Ezek 39:4, 17). As another example, Ezekiel 44 displays a direct intertextual dialog with Isaiah 56, debating the theological propriety of including outsiders within Israel's priestly ranks. (A note on biblical translations is appropriate at this point. All translations of texts from Ezekiel 38–48 here are my own, prepared for the present AYB commentary, unless otherwise noted. All other biblical translations are from the NRSV, unless otherwise noted. A list of modern English translations used in this volume and their abbreviations appears in the front matter.)

The visionary, priestly writings of Ezekiel 38–48 have long resisted efforts at literary categorization. What is the genre here? Up to the present, no consensus exists even on the basic nature of these texts. Are the Gog texts prophecies about international politics, or are they otherworldly visions of doomsday? Do the texts describing a new temple represent a blueprint, instructing exiles returning from Babylonia on God's

reconstruction plans? Or are these chapters eschatological prophecy, looking beyond immediate circumstances to God's future reign? Or again, are they an archetypal model, not intended ever for terrestrial realization? Relatedly, how do we negotiate the tensions between the stipulations of the Pentateuch and the differing rules of Ezekiel 40–48?

This commentary defends the thesis that Ezekiel 38–48 actually consists of two disparate sections of differing generic classification. The first section in Ezekiel 38–39 is otherworldly eschatological prophecy, or, in technical jargon, "proto-apocalyptic" literature. (Scholars contest the proper use of terms such as "apocalyptic" and "apocalypticism," so I avoid them here when possible. For my own definitions and preferred use of these rubrics, see Cook 1995a, 2003, and 2014. I do use the term "proto-apocalyptic" a few times, in the sense of an eschatological perspective that, although predating the eschatology in Daniel, Revelation, and other apocalypses, is certainly comparable. These writings differ from Ezekiel 38–39 in important respects, but the similarity is hard to dispute.) The second section in chapters 40–48 is an archetypal vision of a temple-centered world. It squarely fits the technical genre known as utopian literature. Ezekiel and his inner circle, over time, composed texts in both genres. There is, in my view, no need to posit different authorial circles behind Ezekiel 38–39 and Ezekiel 40–48.

As both a Zadokite priest and an exilic prophet, Ezekiel (and his school) composed in both a prophetic/visionary mode and a priestly/legal mode (see Evans 2006, 31). His book's prophetic genres exhibit clear marks of priestly influence, and vice versa. Critics must avoid the "idealist" supposition that differing genres mean differing groups of writers and editors (Horsley 2007, 7). The same group may use differing perspectival lenses.

The two genres of Ezekiel 38–48 arise out of two differing imaginations, two contrasting perspectival lenses on society and existence. Though differing, these two views or lenses hold much in common, including an emphasis on creation themes, on patterns and structures from the genesis of the cosmos. Ezekiel 38–39 envisions cosmic, archetypal forces of creation coming to life in the end times. The Holy Land experiences the same cosmic struggle of order and chaos that occurred at the world's genesis.

The visionary utopianism of Ezekiel 40–48, on the other hand, presents a microcosm of creation, an exemplar of the entirety of the world. These chapters outline a systematically ordered world organized around God's temple. The sacred model world of geometric and numerical precision differs fundamentally from Ezekiel's earlier metaphorical, imagistic portrayals of lands and realms. By refashioning and embodying the Holy Land of God in geometric and architectonic intricacy, these chapters offer readers a *literary, mandalic icon.* (Mandalas are Buddhist graphic designs symbolizing the cosmos. For the comparison of the utopian temple to a mandala, see Niditch 1986, and the Comments on Ezek 40:47–41:4.)

Ezekiel 38–39, the Gog of Magog material, puts the emphasis pronouncedly on *temporality.* Radical, dualistic eschatology resounds through the Gog passages, as they make reference to time growing short (38:8), the "final end" (38:8), "that day" (38:10, 14, 18, 19; 39:11), "final days" (38:16), and "the day of which I have spoken" (39:8). As history reaches a zenith and chaos is defeated, there emerges as the culmination of Israel's story the ideal Edenic purity and harmony of God's genesis work at creation.

As George Tinker (1994, 179) notes, such an emphasis on temporality, emergence, and radical eschatology has found a home in Euro-American theologies and worldviews

of the Global North. It did not, of course, originate there. Rather, worldviews centering on a literal belief in an imminent judgment and deliverance of the world occur across history and cultures among groups and movements that anthropologists term "millennial" (or "millenarian"). (For a discussion of millennialism, see Grabbe 1989 and Cook 1995a.)

Ezekiel 40–48, the vision of the utopian temple and land, is filled with spatial organization and territorial rhetoric. The focus on spatiality and creation-order combine, as a hierarchical matrix of holiness centered in the temple comes alive to bring God's people and land into an Edenlike relational harmony and balance. (I present the evidence for this below in section 4 of the Introduction.) As Tinker (1994) notes, this sort of emphasis on tiered spatiality and the mapping of territory fits a Native American worldview and spirituality. In a Native American reading, an ideal vision of society such as this "has less to do with what happens in the future than how one imagines oneself in the present in relationship to the Creator and the rest of creation" (179).

In the visionary texts of millennial groups, such as the group of Zadokite authors who composed Ezekiel 38–39, what happened in primordial time (*Urzeit*) repeats itself in the end time (*Endzeit*). Protology becomes eschatology; that is, creation mythology is "eschatologized," so that, as Jindo (2005, 412) observes, the "mythical framework is believed to unfold in concrete, historical incidents. . . . There is only one pattern: chaos is doomed to be defeated." This is the pattern behind the Gog texts.

With Israel restored at earth's center, primordial chaos rolls in like a storm cloud. All creation trembles and shakes as earth reverts to its precreation state. Then, the divine warrior enters the fray to floor the monster and reorder the world. God knocks the bows and arrows from Gog's hands, extends God's reign to earth's edges, and orders the cleansing and purification of God's land. God thus refounds the cosmic center.

In utopian literature, such as Ezekiel 40–48, readers encounter a world of profound ingenuity that has no actual place or time. They find a "teaching picture" of the purity and holiness that befit God's people rather than a prophecy or an architectural blueprint for a community to build. For this reason, Ezekiel 40–48 contains no prophetic word formulas, no oracles announcing God's intervention in history (Mayfield 2010, 117). So too, Ezekiel's prevalent recognition formula, Zimmerli's celebrated *Erkenntnisaussage* refrain, never occurs in Ezekiel 40–48. This is surely because the refrain is associated only with texts announcing divine action *within real history* (Evans 2006, 150, 288). Solid form-critical evidence bars us from interpreting the utopian vision as eschatological prophecy.

Sir Thomas More in 1516 invented the term "utopia" by playing on two Greek prefixes, *ou* and *eu.* The prefix *ou* means "not," "no," and *eu* means "good," "well." Combined with the Greek word *topos,* meaning "place," a utopia is thus, at once, a place of well-being and a fictive nonplace. What More's utopia is not, contrary to widespread usage, is a perfect place. Neither is Ezekiel's ideal temple and land.

Ezekiel's utopia is not the eschatological realization of God's reign (contrast Milgrom 2012, 43). Would-be trespassers still need to be terrified by leonine cherubim (41:17–20); atonement is still required (45:17, 20); the ideal David of 34:23–24 and 37:25 is nowhere in sight. In particular, Israel's promised eschatological heart transplant is *not* presupposed (Ezek 11:19–20, 36:26–27; Lyons 2010, 28). This is clear due to the continuing need for purification and reparation offerings in the utopia (40:39; 42:13;

44:29; 45:15, 17–25; 46:20), offerings that would be superfluous were there a new heart ensuring obedience (11:20). God declares to Israel that when the new heart arrives, "I will . . . make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances" (36:27).

A literary utopia of More's type is a means of social critique, which must grapple persuasively with the continuing struggles and tragedies of real life. A literary utopia thus keeps at least one foot in the problematic world of the present. Recent critical theory, Schweitzer (2006, 19) argues, reads utopian works "not as blueprints for ideal societies, but rather as revolutionary texts designed to challenge the status quo." The original island of Utopia described by More in his book of 1516 was not futuristic or eschatological but an engaging literary critique of contemporaneous England.

Here again, Ezekiel 40–48 specifically fits More's idea of a utopia. One example is the vision's critique of the monarchy and of Jerusalemite royal theology. Ezekiel's vision grapples directly with monarchic abuses. It places God's temple above and away from the land's central city (45:6); it replaces the royal monarch with a tribal "chieftain" (*nāśîʾ;* 44:3); and it moves the *nāśîʾ* out of the city to more peripheral lands (45:7). (On Ezekiel's replacement of a king with a premonarchic chieftain, see Note *Nasi* on 44:3.)

Ezekiel 40–48 is *not* a vision of a future God-given reality, which readers must fit into all God's other plans for earth's destiny. Neither is it a blueprint for an actual, realistic temple slated for human construction. Unlike Neo-Babylonian building inscriptions, such as those of Nebuchadnezzar and Nabopolassar, there is no listing of building materials and no detailing of a workforce (Carvalho 1992, 102). The vision emphasizes many fantastic elements, such as divinely chiseled stonework (see Note *Steps* on 43:17), a west building where an open valley stood (163 n. 67), a rock platform capping primordial chaos (see Note *Elevated platform* on 47:1), and a stream gurgling from the temple to spawn miracle trees (see Note *Many trees* on 47:7). As Carvalho (188) discerns, Ezekiel's utopia "could not be built, not at any level of the text." I do not understand the claim of Milgrom (2012, 52) that human construction of the utopian temple is "feasible"; I firmly contest his idea that "there is nothing miraculous about the structure."

The efforts of some readers across the centuries to fit Ezekiel's temple into a complex prophetic timeline that includes other significantly different temples, such as those of Zechariah or Herod, have been misguided. In fact, despite the surface differences, the new Jerusalems of Zechariah, or even of John of Patmos for that matter, might elicit no objection from Ezekiel's devotees. The separation of God's indwelling Presence (the *kābôd*) from the land's central city in Ezekiel 40–48 should not be taken literally, at face value, but rather as an imaginative and engaging teaching picture arguing against all past monarchic abuses. Whether or not the actual place of God's throne will lie outside what was once the royal capital may be neither here nor there. Stevenson (1996, 153) puts it well: "Those who argue that the Book of Ezekiel had no effect in postexilic Israel, because the future temple did not get built according to this 'plan,' have missed the fact that postexilic Israel *was* a society organized around a temple without a human king. . . . The radical change in social structure imagined by this vision [of Ezekiel] *actually occurred.* There *was* a new Israel, a new temple, and no king" (emphasis added).

Bennett Simon, a Harvard psychoanalyst and student of literature and drama, has studied Ezekiel 40–48 in conversation with biblical scholars such as Peter Machinist

and Jacob Milgrom. His research has been inspired by emphases and concerns shared between Ezekiel's utopian texts and a class of psychiatry patients. Of specific interest to him are concerns with precise mathematical and geometric observation and measurement. Simon's clinical work has uncovered people whose dreams and behaviors focus on geometric detail and structural precision, just as does Ezekiel 40–48. This focus becomes a powerful weapon against memories of trauma, experiences of chaos, and tendencies toward aggression. Simon plausibly surmises that Ezekiel's temple vision likewise represents a powerful rhetorical overthrow of all chaotic disequilibrium and deathful existential threat. Simon (2009, 414) states:

> My supposition is that the geometric vision is defensive, adaptive, and, potentially, creative—a way of struggling with problems of evil, contamination, and imperfection, including imperfection in the relationship between God and human worshippers. We yearn for some geometric and arithmetic precision because our desires and passions are terribly imprecise, indeed at times verging on the chaotic and the unbounded. The beauty and elegance of mathematics inspire awe in us, contrasting with the persistence of a certain ugliness and lack of grace in our innermost world, let alone in the external social and political world. Geometry cleanses, orders, and puts strict, defined boundaries in place. The geometric dream attempts to resolve intractable human aggression, including the lust for power.

The commentary on Ezekiel 40–48 that follows points out copious examples of the arithmetic precision of the text and works to illuminate its utopian geometric vision. Many insights emerge, which I will not summarize here. Suffice it to note at this juncture that for several reasons the geometry focuses on the flat, two-dimensional plane, with only limited indications of vertical rise. Why does Ezekiel's temple have so few descriptions and measurements of height? Why do many think of it as a flat "blueprint"?

As Stevenson (1996, 163) has shown, part of the answer is that demarcating territory, and thereby structuring human geography, does not often require attention to vertical dimensions. Ezekiel is less interested in visualizing buildings and structures than in "the effort to control social space, by defining areas, communicating boundaries, and attempting to control access" (161). The point of this program of structuring space is to control access to God's holiness but also to share this holiness with Israel, as argued in section 4 of this Introduction and in the treatments of texts that follow. With God's temple-centered program in place, Israel's sanctification appears (see Ezek 37:28).

Another part of the answer emerges from the rethinking of space and architecture in the first half of the twentieth century by such figures as Michel Leiris, Georges Bataille, and Alberto Giacometti (see Krauss 1993, 171). These thinkers worked to imagine worlds, like that in Ezekiel 40–48, where the emphasis is on horizontal axes. They considered spaces whose vertical dimensions were collapsed onto the horizontal. A sample artwork from this era is Giocometti's "The Fall of a Body onto a Diagram." Giacometti imagined a sculpture with no sculpted figure at all, but merely a pedestal or base. The pedestal, which normally positions a graven image, here becomes the entire work of art, a work subsisting on a purely horizontal field. For me, this artwork is an invitation to

push beyond symbols and images to imagine a living reality to which they point. The art itself remains incomplete and insufficient; it begs to be "filled in." The "flatness" of Ezekiel's vision invites the same imaginative move.

Ezekiel's utopian plan is largely two-dimensional because it aims at structuring terrestrial, "horizontal" spaces that soon become zones of contact with transcendent, "vertical" reality. The architectural zones of the utopia of chapters 40–48 await a *filling in* as God takes up bodily residence. In this manner, the utopian texts place the emphasis not on buildings and icons, but on the coming, tangible living reality of YHWH.

Thus, for example, the utopian temple departs from Jerusalem's preexilic shrine in lacking an elevated adytum, or inner sanctum. Like ground-level Babylonian shrines, Ezekiel's adytum symbolizes a domicile where a deity can "anchor itself" on earth (see Carvalho 1992, 40; Comments on 40:47–41:4). In a powerful text, Ezek 43:1–5, the Presence enters the sanctuary complex, roaring and glowing bright, bringing to life the temple plan. It arrives to fill in a bare zone with what readers may imagine to be the really real.

II.

Ezekiel 38–48 as Part of the Book of Ezekiel

It has been difficult to squelch the idea that the Gog texts in Ezekiel 38–39 intrude into Ezekiel's book. Scholars seem unable to resist the thought that they represent very late, extraneous material. An abortive line of reasoning to this effect understands Ezekiel's priestly orientation to be incompatible with the imagination of the type of millennial group that would write a text such as Ezekiel 38–39 (on this, see the discussion below). Other scholars reason that the language of the Gog texts is derivative (drawn from Ezekiel 1–37 and other scriptural passages) and is thus inauthentic compared with the language of Ezekiel and his school. They argue for apocalyptic notions here that are reflective of a later, Hellenistic milieu after the Babylonian exile and the Persian-era restoration.

The history of the composition of Ezekiel 38–39 is complex. Tensions and seams within the text indicate that an original core authentic to Ezekiel and his earliest editors was later expanded by the Ezekiel school. Certainly, some core of the Gog prophecy must have been part of the book of Ezekiel's earliest outline, since without it there is no decisive reversal of the destruction of God's temple in 586 BCE by "northern" powers. Reversal of all past wrongs is fundamental to the book's section on restoration.

As discussed in the commentary that follows, the core grew over time to include new material added in 38:18–23 and 39:11–16. The growth, however, shows every sign of being "organic." That is, it represents a deepening of motifs and themes native to Ezekiel and was carried out in a manner displaying a distinct family resem-

blance to other editorial work within the book. It is not an artificial and anthological in-grafting.

The evidence of organic growth within Ezekiel 38–39 appears immediately to dispel one current interpretation of the Gog of Magog piece. It renders highly unlikely the idea that the Gog material arose as a unified (whole cloth) composition of a single late (Hellenistic) scribe. Our striking evidence of a complex process of transmission, reflection, and expansion does not fit an assessment of these chapters as a late mosaic of allusions to Ezekiel and other prophets. Thus, I disagree with Tooman about the Gog passages having a "pastiche character" (see Lyons 2009, 142).

Proponents of a pastiche thesis of composition refer to the noticeable appearance in the Gog section of references to earlier Scriptures, but this is best explained by the late eschatological genre at play. The mantic scouring of earlier Scriptures and the inner-biblical interpretation of those texts are now known to characterize the work of Israelite millennial groups from their texts' earliest appearance in the exilic and postexilic eras. (For discussion, see the Comments on Ezek 38:1–17.)

Without the pastiche theory to distract us, we would hardly attribute the Gog oracles to anyone but Ezekiel and his disciples. The expression "fix hooks in your jaws" (38:4), for example, resonates with Ezek 19:4, 9, and 29:4. The phrase "mountains of Israel" (38:8) is unique to the book, where it occurs eleven times outside of the Gog texts. God's gathering of the exiles (38:12) hearkens back to Ezek 11:17, 28:25, and 34:13. The nations of 38:13, Sheba, Dedan, and Tarshish, are already familiar from Ezek 27:12, 20, and 22. The divine holiness theme seen in 38:16 and 39:7 is central to Ezekiel's book (see 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23). The phrase "it is coming, it will happen" in 39:8 exactly echoes 21:7.

The "in-house" style of the Gog texts entails much more than merely recycling pet vocabulary. Especially familiar in Ezekiel 38–39 is Ezekiel's literary technique of "halving," that is, of giving key sections of the book dual ("diptych") panels elaborating varying themes but with an ending that links both parts (see Greenberg 1983, 25–27, 137–38). The twin "panels" here consist of 38:2–23 and 39:1–29. So too, one immediately spots such familiar markers of style as the address "Human One" (38:2, 14; 39:1, 17), the use of quotations (38:11, 13), and the emphasis on holiness (38:16, 23; 39:27).

More telling than markers of style is clear evidence of Ezekiel's priestly frame of mind, indeed of a Zadokite orientation, in Ezekiel 38–39. Who but authentic Zadokite proponents of priestly HS traditions would put such emphasis on reversing ritual impurity in a text of radical eschatology? Sweeney (2005, 140) considers that the core significance of the Gog oracles "lies in the purification of the land once Gog is defeated." Joyce (2007a, 213–14) provides the following summary of the priestly mindset of Ezekiel 38–39:

> Ezekiel 38–39 not only manifests proto-apocalyptic elements, but also priestly themes such as a preoccupation with divine holiness (e.g., 38:23) and cultic purity (e.g., 39:14). Cook has argued for the hand of "central priests" in producing Ezek 38–39, as part of his challenge to the widely held hypothesis, associated especially with Plöger (1962) and Hanson (1979), that apocalyptic literature emerged from marginal circles far removed from the priests who

exercised power at the centre of society (Cook 1995a: 85–121; see also the valuable discussion in Mein 2001a: 224–33).

There are multiple instances of dependence in Ezekiel 38–39 on HS texts—enough to show that the authors adhere specifically to Zadokite tradition. At Ezek 38:8, 11, 14 and 39:6, the Gog oracles draw on Lev 26:5 and its locution "living securely." Ezekiel 38:16, 23 draw on Lev 26:45, echoing the HS concern that God redeem Israel before the nations' eyes (so also Ezek 39:27 draws on Lev 26:36, 45). Ezekiel 39:23, 26 contain the only occurrences of the string *ʾăšer māʿălû-bî* (because they betrayed me) outside of Lev 26:40. Most significantly, Ezek 39:26 draws on Lev 26:5, 6, and 40, repeating "live securely," "there is none who terrifies," and "act treacherously." Awareness of the context in Leviticus betrays a mindful interest here in HS Scripture (Lyons 2009, 184).

Other arguments firmly place the core of Ezekiel 38–39 before Hellenistic times, even before the program of Haggai and Zechariah to rebuild the temple. It must date earlier than 515 BCE as Zechariah's vision of Jerusalem without walls in Zech 2:4 (MT 2:8) draws directly on Ezek 38:11 and interprets it overly literally. Ezekiel 38:1–16 must predate Zech 2:1–13 since the latter passage supplies an exegesis of the former text, explaining that Jerusalem must remain unwalled "because of the multitude of people and animals in it." Instead of walls, God's supernatural fire will protect the city (Zech 2:5, Ezek 39:6); God's presence will be known in Israel's "midst" (Zech 2:5, Ezek 39:7). Haggai also echoes language from Ezekiel 38; specifically, diction about slaughter by the swords of comrades in Ezek 38:21 reappears in Hag 2:22 (see Petersen 1984, 101).

A generation or two later than 515 BCE, perhaps seventy years after Zechariah's time, Joel's prophecies again presuppose the text of Ezekiel 38–39. Joel proclaimed a millennial response to locust and sirocco plagues that were striking the Yehud community organized around the rebuilt temple. Significantly, he called the locust army faced by Yehud the "northerner" (Joel 2:20), an appellation that fits neither locusts nor siroccos. Since locusts and siroccos come from the east, out of the desert, Joel must have understood his present crisis as a harbinger of Gog's attack, and he pinned an eschatological motif from Ezekiel ("northerner") to it (Ezek 38:6, 15; 39:2). Lorenz Dürr (1923, 99) aptly perceived that the Gog oracles were so familiar in Yehud in Joel's time that all it took was a locust swarm to arouse in Joel the expectation of Ezekiel's northern army.

As final examples, note how Joel appears to have coined the name "Valley of Jehoshaphat," that is, "Valley where the Lord Judges" (Joel 3:2, 12 [MT 4:2, 12]) based on Ezekiel's *Ge' Hamon Gog,* that is, "Valley of Gog's Mob" (Ezek 39:11), where God *judges* the northern enemy (Ezek 38:22, 39:21). During the same period, both Joel 2:28–29 (MT 3:1–2) and Zech 12:10 reused the rare diction of Ezek 39:29 about a pouring out of God's spirit on earth. In both of these cases of reuse of material, the source texts in Ezekiel are from late layers in the Gog of Magog passage. This is significant, since it shows that the core of Ezekiel 38–39 must date rather early indeed.

Just as some core of the Gog text was an early part of Ezekiel, so some core of Ezekiel 40–48 must have been part of the earliest outline of the book. Without this text, the book's central crisis of the absence of the divine Presence from God's temple is left unresolved. Tooman (2013, 154), among many others, notes the key role that descriptions of the Presence, of the *kābôd,* play in structuring the book. Certainly, the *kābôd* is central in the three main vision accounts of Ezekiel 1–3, 8–11, and 40–48.

From chapter 11 on, the Presence has been anomalously absent from Israel and the land's central shrine. Here, the book raises a profound literary and theological tension, which begs for resolution. Ezekiel clearly prophesied the restoration of the HS covenant (16:60–63, 34:25, 37:26), yet as a Zadokite bearer of HS ideals he could scarcely have conceived of a future for the covenant apart from the conviction of 37:28. The Presence *must* once more indwell the temple and sanctify Israel (see Exod 25:8; 29:45, 46; Num 5:3, 35:34, all HS). Since, within Ezekiel's book, the return of the Presence occurs only in chapters 40–48, at least a core of these chapters is integral to Ezekiel's thought. A vision of a new temple *belongs* in Ezekiel.

The understandings of Ezekiel 40–48 about the Presence, the *kābôd,* and about God's purposes in taking up residence in the temple fit squarely within Ezekiel's affinity with HS. They represent a fulfillment of Zadokite hopes. Ezekiel 40–48 is, in fact, elaborating and concretizing earlier Zadokite longings for a bodily incarnation of the Presence and a focal hub of holiness generating a tiered latticework of sanctification for Israel (on both notions, see the discussion below in section 4 of the Introduction). Thus, I fully concur with the position of Marvin Sweeney (2015, 161):

> Many modern scholars have attempted to argue that the Temple vision is a late addition to the book of Ezekiel [e.g., Zimmerli 1979, 73, *contra* Levenson 1976, 10–11]. However, Ezekiel's identity as both a Zadokite priest and as a visionary prophet of YHWH make the culminating vision of the book a necessity, particularly since the book of Ezekiel is organized around the notion of a purge of the Jerusalem Temple at the center of Jerusalem, Israel, and all creation, and their anticipated restoration. . . . With the vision of the new Temple in Ezek 40–48, Ezekiel's encounter with the holy as a Zadokite priest and visionary prophet of YHWH is completed.

How different is the Zadokites' strictly circumscribed understanding of the *kābôd* from other scriptural uses of the term as "radiance" or "splendor" (Isa 6:3, Hab 3:3, Ps 57:11)! The Zadokite vision moves as far as possible from pantheism, since a diffuse and undifferentiated sort of holiness would appear to lack transformative, sanctifying power. To be sure, the Presence in Ezekiel emits a radiant "glory," an aura of splendor, but the incarnate God that Ezekiel envisions cannot be identified with this sort of aura. Ezekiel 43:2 distinguishes the Lord's *kābôd* from its beaming radiance, with which the earth shines.

Even if the utopian vision were not needed to wrap up the crisis of the *kābôd*'s absence, it would still be needed to resolve the promises of preceding oracles in the book. Greenberg (1984, 181–82) notes in particular the oracles in Ezek 20:40 and 37:24–28. The former passage promises the restoration of holy sacrifices and temple worship atop God's high, holy mountain, the very mountain of which Ezek 40:2 speaks. The latter passage promises the setting of God's sanctuary in the people's midst forever and the resulting sanctification of Israel. Ezekiel 40–48 fulfills these very ideals, which in fact trace back to Zadokite, HS texts, such as Exod 31:13 and Lev 19:2, 21:15, and 22:32. (See, for examples, Notes *Dwell among* on 43:7 and *Consecrated* on 43:26.) If there was clear evidence of Ezekiel's priestly frame of mind, of his Zadokite orientation, in Ezekiel 38–39, this is even more the case in Ezekiel 40–48, which exhibits dependence on HS throughout.

If at least the core of Ezekiel 38–39 and the core of Ezekiel 40–48 are authentic to the book and cohere with preceding promises, hopes, trajectories, and Zadokite diction, this does not mean that there are no rough transitions and jarring shifts to confront readers as they move into and through these blocks of material. We have already noted how the reader must shift from a fundamentally temporal imagination to a thoroughly spatial perspective in transitioning from the Gog material into the utopian vision. Millenarian literature and utopian literature are two very different genres. In moving between them, the reader jumps from forceful images of excess and cataclysm in Ezekiel 38–39 into a mode of careful inspection and painstaking measurement in Ezekiel 40–48.

In comparison with Ezekiel 38–39, chapters 40–48 breathe an air of calm as God's messenger leads the prophet on a tour of the new temple. Gone is the language of wrath boiling up in fury, the awful descriptions of blazing rage. As the reader tours the temple, things at first seem ordinary and sane. All the measuring seems to bind chaos, replacing excess with precision. Yet, we are mistaken to think that this world is a safe and carefree place. No, this is an enchanted realm in which God's presence may blow you over (43:3), where touching a priestly vestment can harm or kill you (44:19), and where an expanding river may quickly sweep you into the water over your head (47:5). This is God's garden of creation, containing both profound danger and intense blessing. Those who enter to be blessed must do so reverently, discerning God's bodily Presence.

III.

Ezekiel 38–48 in Historical and Social Contexts

As discussed above, the core of Ezekiel 38–39 emerged among Ezekiel and his followers during their Babylonian exile. Perhaps the texts date to the time of Cyrus of Persia's advance (see Cook 1995a, 111; Zimmerli 1983, 303). Certainly, they date earlier than 515 BCE, the time of the restoration-era visions of Zechariah. As noted, Zechariah's vision of Jerusalem in Zech 2:4 (MT 2:8) draws directly on Ezek 38:11 and interprets it overly literally. The literalism of Zechariah 2 establishes that Ezekiel 38 is the earlier of the two texts.

Ezekiel appears to have enjoyed high status and a central social location within his community of exiles. As Stevenson (1996, 148) summarizes: "As a priest, Ezekiel was one of Judah's educated elite, an obvious choice for training in Babylonian culture. The fact that he was taken in the first exile in 597, along with King Jehoiachin, indicates his social status in Judah." Rather than living any sort of impoverished or persecuted existence, Ezekiel dwelled in a house where Judean elders could seek his counsel (Ezek 8:1, 14:1, 20:1). The picture fits Jer 29:5, which advises the exiles in Babylonia to build houses, plant gardens, and eat their produce. Thus, Ezekiel 38–39 does not represent a

case of a millennial worldview arising among a group alienated within its community. Neither do we find evidence within Ezekiel's book of physical persecution by outsiders. Ezekiel's radical millennial text did not emerge out of any blatant oppression or physical suffering, such as economic slavery or physical abuse. That is not to deny that the Babylonian exiles had a history of forced migration, disorientation, and psychological turmoil. The Babylonian exile overthrew their old world, setting the stage for new worldviews to form.

As noted, the early core of Ezekiel 38–39 grew over time to include intense new material added in 38:18–23 and 39:11–16. This later layer of the Gog section is likely associated with a period of cognitive radicalization within the Ezekiel circle. Such a radicalizing phase could have occurred as the hopes of the circle rose just as the world changed unpredictably with returns to Yehud beginning under Sheshbazzar (ca. 538 BCE). Mental gears shifted rapidly, as the Ezekiel group grasped its new authority and power. The wildest dreams of group members pressed in on them, but Yehud lay in ruins.

The editorial material in 39:25–29 represents a final stage in this section's composition. The text might fit an era such as that of Zech 2:6 (ca. 520–515 BCE), when the exiles were still being summoned home to Yehud. More likely, however, it emerged in a period postdating the millennial fervor around the rebuilding of the temple. It reflects a mood of "routinization," when millennial expectations calmed and editors integrated the Gog texts into Ezekiel's prophecies as they emerged as a scroll. (On the phenomenon of routinization, see Cook 1995a, 78–79, and the bibliography cited there.)

Just as with the Gog material, so with the utopia of Ezekiel 40–48 a literary core almost certainly dates to before the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah early in the restoration era. Details in Zechariah already reflect the inspiration of Ezekiel's utopian vision. For example, Zechariah 4 echoes and adapts Ezek 44:1–3 (see Comments on 44:1–3). The text of Ezekiel must date earlier. At an earlier time, in exile where there was time to think abstractly and idealistically, the recording of the utopian vision was feasible (see Levenson 1976, 116). There, in exile, one might imagine the Levites living in an ideal precinct accommodating fifteen thousand souls (see Note *Towns* on 45:5). Later, the fact of far fewer Levites on the ground—at least 70 percent fewer—problematizes the rise of such a vision.

It strains credulity to imagine the Zadokites of the early restoration recording the complex, geometric ideals of Ezekiel 40–48 when a pressing reconstruction of a real temple and its rituals was at hand. The returnees to the land, wrestling with real facts and immense challenges on the ground (see, e.g., Hag 1:2, 6), can scarcely be imagined recording detailed but impossible mathematics. The genesis of such a utopian temple and idealistic land division is more at home in earlier years, when Zadokites in exile had occasion to develop a complex rhetoric of measurements and geometry. All the arithmetic behind the symbolic numbers, proportions, and squares in the utopian vision is at home in the Babylonian exile (see Comments on 40:1–27). Babylonian mathematicians certainly knew squares, produced tables of squares, and worked with what was later called the Pythagorean theorem.

In many other respects, too, Ezekiel 40–48 reflects a Babylonian setting, or at least a setting where memories of Babylonian customs, beliefs, and rituals were still fresh in the mind. Thus, the vision of God storming into the temple in Ezek 43:1–3 and 44:4 works

well as brilliant rhetorical satire mocking how the Babylonian deity Marduk moves into the *akitu* temple under royal custody, taken by the king's hand (consult Halpern 1981, 54). The self-contained altar yard fronting Ezekiel's temple building (see Note *Yard* on 40:47) is a design element reflecting Babylonian temple planning but contradicting Persian architecture (Carvalho 1992, 157). Carvalho (170–71, 186) correctly adds that the stair-step temple design, ziggurat-shaped altar, and carved paneling in the shrine proper also suggest a Babylonian provenance for the Ezekiel school's temple architecture.

Ganzel and Holtz (2014) offer additional links between Neo-Babylonian temples and Ezekiel's vision. In both cases, courtyard space is arranged hierarchically to signal increasing sanctity as one moves toward the sacred core. Gates mark transition points between the tiered zones. A gradual approach to an inner sanctum such as that in Ezekiel is found in the Babylonian Ezida temple at Borsippa (219). In Babylonia and in Ezekiel's vision, temple courtyards are wide and have prominent peripheral chambers. So too, both in Babylonia and in Ezekiel's vision it appears important to emphasize an outer temenos wall. Neo-Babylonian temple precincts show monumental gates, with associated chambers, marking the entrances, as does Ezekiel 40–48 (221–22). Ganzel and Holtz conclude that in authoring the utopian vision, the Ezekiel writers had "a working model not too far from their homes in exile" (226).

Stevenson (1996, 115 n. 19) points to details in Ezekiel 40–48 that reinforce God's judgment on preexilic culture by emphasizing Babylonian measures that have won the day as Judah's new norm. Two such measures are the mina of sixty shekels and the rhetorical emphasis on the seven hand–breadth cubit. Later texts that were dependent on Ezekiel 40–48 but written back in Persian-era Yehud apparently did not understand some of the Babylonian details and influences within the utopian vision. Thus, removed from a Babylonian milieu, Zech 14:8 seems to have missed the allusion to Mesopotamia's great "twinned" river (see Note *Double river* on 47:9). Zechariah moved in a literalistic direction and imagined two separate rivers emanating from the temple.

I admit to skepticism about the thesis of Milgrom (2012, 44–53) that Ezekiel 40–48 drew significant inspiration from the Apollo temple at Delphi. Surely, as just noted, Ezekiel's extra-Israelite reference points lay in Mesopotamia, where he was exiled, not in Greece (see Peterson 2012, 298–99 n. 17). Of course, Milgrom's observation that the temple at Delphi parallels Ezekiel's complex in lacking an inner wall is interesting (see fig. 2, location D). Various Babylonian deities, however, had temple buildings inside an outer temenos enclosure with no surrounding gated walls of their own. They might lie off of a ziggurat's walled terrace, outside of its gates. The E-nun-mah building at Ur, a Neo-Babylonian temple, is one example. Another is the Ekhursag temple building in the same complex. In Babylon, Marduk's Esagila temple lay outside the Etemenanki enclosure.

As discussed below in the commentary proper, Ezekiel's utopian sanctuary appears to use its ziggurat-shaped sacrificial altar (see fig. 8) atop the priestly terrace to signify divine transcendence. Simultaneously, the *unwalled* inner court and *unwalled* temple building signify the interactive character of an immanent divine indwelling. The omission of any inner wall powerfully signals the utopia's driving aim of opening up the sanctifying power of an indwelling God to all Israel. As Milgrom (2012, 44) himself notes, this layout makes the divine promise of Ezek 37:28 concrete: "The nations shall know that I the Lord sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary is among them."

Ezekiel's dual architectural emphases on transcendence *and* immanence have their external cultural reference points in Babylonian temple architectural design. Milgrom's recourse to Delphic influence in explaining the absence of an inner wall in the utopian temple of Ezekiel 40–48 is unnecessary. The same holds true of Milgrom's second strongest argument, that Delphi explains the focal role of Ezekiel's central square altar.

Here again, Babylonian, not Delphic, influence is at play. Just as Babylon's Etemenanki ziggurat was the city's focal shrine, "the foundation of heaven and earth," so Ezekiel's altar symbolized earth's "bosom" (Ezek 43:14), the mountain of Eden linking earth to heaven (cf. the *sullām* ramp of Gen 28:12). Holiness radiates out to Israel from Ezekiel's focal, anchoring, square-shaped altar. As I will show, this is symbolized by a pattern of increasingly larger concentric square zones projecting out from the square altar. Notably, assigning the square proportion a key role is a specifically Babylonian architectural value. Note too that a washing annex, barracks, sacristies, and kitchens lie situated around the periphery of Ezekiel's inner court (see fig. 2, locations K, L, M, Y, AA), a feature mirroring Babylonian temple design. In Babylonian temple complexes, all manner of buildings lay around the edges of wide courts (Ganzel and Holtz 2014, 220).

A core of Ezekiel 40–48 emerged during the Babylonian exile, but disciples of Ezekiel expanded the vision during postexilic times. One of the clearest examples of such expansion occurs in chapter 44, which contains a set of echoes of texts in Third Isaiah, texts almost certainly from the Persian-era restoration (see Comments on 44:4–31). These echoes represent the Zadokites' dialog with an Aaronide vision of priestly inclusivity, a vision in Isaiah 56 and 66 that shares much diction with Ezekiel 44 but, unlike the utopian vision, appears to welcome some foreigners into cultic service.

Steven S. Tuell (1992) has furnished sound arguments that starting in chapter 43, Ezekiel's utopian vision was expanded in significant passages by temple law, that is, by planning or even actual regulations from the sixth-century restoration era in Yehud. For example, Tuell argues that the procedures for consecrating the altar in Ezek 43:18–27 incorporate plans to dedicate a rebuilt restoration-era altar in the Persian province of Yehud. This view is plausible, although it is unclear how this altar might relate to the one erected in Ezra 3:2 (see Radak on Ezek 43:19). On Tuell's general approach, I would mostly simply caution scholars not to push beyond his suggestions and excavate from Ezekiel any sort of complete law code generated in Yehud. The Zadokites were already in possession of the "Holiness Code" and related HS rules. They did not need to create an entirely new Persian-era system of regulations. Rather, they needed merely to address selected areas of prime significance to them (consult Stevenson 1996, 127, 130).

The commentary that follows identifies the most probable examples of postexilic expansion of Ezekiel 38–48 as I work through the material. When evidence allows, I elaborate on the setting and circumstances of the expansions. It is not the goal of this commentary, however, to reconstruct the editorial growth of Ezekiel 38–48 in any detail. No one commentary can encompass every angle of Ezekiel's investigation, and the text's complex redaction history can be treated only in piecemeal fashion in the present volume. Other monographs and commentaries provide more coverage of this. It is my view, in any case, that almost all editorial expansions of Ezekiel 38–48 grow out of and complement the HS, Zadokite language and thinking in the exilic cores of these chapters. Tools of redaction criticism are not needed to account for significant internal

contradictions, inconsistencies, and tensions. I grapple with claims to the contrary as appropriate.

Although I find the classic 1957 contribution of Gese on the layers of redaction within Ezekiel 40–48 informative, I remain unconvinced by his fragile reconstruction of multiple editorial layers in tension. The encyclopedic volumes of Zimmerli (1979, 1983) on Ezekiel, begun in the 1960s, continued Gese's project. More recent attempts to "stratify" the text have emerged in the work of T. A. Rudnig (2000) and K.-F. Pohlmann (2001). Readers interested in this angle of criticism are referred to these scholars' efforts. Joyce (2007a, 219), however, reflects a common judgment when he cautions that this sort of "refined stratification attempts to demonstrate more than could ever be known about the undoubtedly complex history of the book's redaction" (see also Evans 2006, 63–64).

Moreover, Evans (2006) rightly cautions against any stratifying procedure based on a supposed dichotomy between material in Ezekiel that is prophetic/dynamic and material that is priestly/learned/legal. As he states, "It seems that the identity of Ezekiel as a priest-prophet completely disappears in some radical German[-language] scholarship" (31). For a relevant example of what Evans is worried about, see the comments of Nihan (2004, 115–16).

As is now clear from this introduction, I defend in this commentary the view that Ezekiel and his followers who produced Ezekiel 38–48 were Israelite temple priests of the Zadokite branch, who especially treasured the priestly Scriptures in the Pentateuch now identified as the HS strand. As Strine (2013, 168) writes, Ezekiel is a prophetic "counterpart" to HS; his theological program "agrees with H at nearly every point." That a great deal of HS predates Ezekiel's book is now solidly established by the hard work of scholars such as Lyons (2009) and MacDonald (2015). The commentary below assumes the value of this insight and, at frequent points, critically extends it.

Israel Knohl (1995, 46, 47, 91–92), who dates HS as early as the eighth century BCE and the reign of Hezekiah, documents Ezekiel's clear use of HS terms and phrases. Various exegetes, of course, preceded Knohl in revising the date of the Torah's priestly materials (now known as PT and HS) so as to place them before Ezekiel's era. A 1977 lecture by S. Dean McBride Jr., for example, argued that Ezekiel 40–48 presupposes and accords with the Pentateuch's priestly material (private lecture notes). In this same era, Avi Hurvitz began offering arguments from the history of the Hebrew language situating priestly law and narrative before Ezekiel's times. Scholars advancing Hurvitz's work have included Milgrom, Fishbane, Rooker, and Levitt Kohn (for discussion, see Evans 2006, 43–48, 212–13). Of course, these scholars were not necessarily aware of the distinctive character of HS over against PT and of Ezekiel's close links with HS (on Levitt Kohn, see Strine 2013, 168).

Although Knohl traces a temporal, sequential relationship between the two component strands of the priestly writings of the Pentateuch, HS and PT, it is better, in my view, to differentiate these priestly schools along social-scientific lines. Specifically, I want to link them respectively with the Zadokite circle and a differing, more generically Aaronide circle. (The Zadokites, as Cross [1973, 208–15] well argued, were a dominating Aaronide family, an inner-Aaronide lineage.) In contrast to Knohl, furthermore, I believe that PT's thinking and theology turn up elsewhere in the biblical text, specifically in Isaiah 40–66. I have built a case for this in my 2008 monograph *Conversations*

with Scripture: 2 Isaiah and discuss some of the specific evidence in the present volume in the Comments on 44:4–31.

Who were the Zadokites, and is there really any hard evidence for such a priestly house? To begin to address this question, first put aside the term "Zadokite" for the moment and consider simply the thinking and theology of Ezekiel and the HS texts and their tradents. Note how they differ from PT and Isaiah 40–66 in both understanding and terminology (e.g., see Note *Was wood* on 41:22; Note *Adulterous worship* on 43:7; Note *My food* on 44:7). To assure oneself that differing priestly groups are in dialog, one need merely study the interaction between Ezekiel 44 and Isaiah 56 and 66 (see Comments on 44:4–31). The dialog is between two clerical factions, neither of which are Levites. (The Levites hold altogether different assumptions; see Jeremiah 33. In fact, the Isaian texts offer an eschatological suspension of the very covenantal foundation of the Levites' house, Jer 33:20–21. Thus, Isa 66:21 takes up Jer 33:21 and twists its terms.)

Or again, consider Ezek 40:44–46 and its solid witness to two groups of Israelite priests in dialog and tension. The text assigns separate priestly groups different chambers atop the utopian temple's inner "priests-only" terrace. Both groups of chamber occupants must be priests, not Levites. They are both so named (*kōhănîm,* vv. 45, 46). So also, HS in Num 18:2–5 bars Levites from the specific spheres of duty (temple and altar) referenced here. Further, the utopian vision allows priests alone access to the temple's raised inner courtyard (Ezek 42:13–14; 44:9–13, 19; 45:4; 46:2; see especially Note *Priestly zone* on 44:7). Stevenson (1996, 60) thus correctly states the thrust of the text of Ezek 40:44–46: "The Zadokites have access to the Altar; the rest of the priests discharge duties in the Inner Court and the House building" (also see Tuell 2009, 288).

HS shares the idea of two separate central clerical houses in Israel, both separate from the Levites. It understands the priests of both houses to descend from Aaron, one set through Eleazar and the other through Ithamar. Like Ezekiel 40–48, it elevates one group (the line of Eleazar) over the other (the line of Ithamar). Although both Eleazar and Ithamar are sons of Aaron, the line of Ithamar must accept the priests of Eleazar's line as their superiors. HS places Ithamar in charge of Levites with lesser duties, while it has Eleazar direct the Levites responsible for the most important items of the tabernacle (Numbers 3–4). At Num 3:32, HS calls Eleazar the "chief over the leaders of the Levites." Numbers 25:10–13 (HS) even goes so far as to narrate God's grant of a covenant of perpetual priesthood specifically to Eleazar's son, Phinehas.

The line of Eleazar and Phinehas produced Zadok, a chief priest of King David's time and the eponymous ancestor of the Zadokites. The question arises as to whether the authors of HS understood the circle of priests bearing the perpetual priestly covenant of Numbers 25 in their own era to be the Zadokites. Conversely, Ithamar's priestly house could well form the mid-ranking tier of priests described in Ezek 40:44–46.

Caution is appropriate, since Eleazar had a wider circle of priestly descendants than just Zadokites (1 Chr 24:3). Still, the HS narratives, set back during Israel's wilderness wanderings, could not easily speak specifically of Zadok and his scions, who hailed from David's time. If, on the other hand, Zadok was the leader and representative of Eleazar's descendants in David's era, as 1 Chr 24:3 assumes, wilderness-era narratives would be able to elevate the Zadokites *indirectly* by elevating Eleazar and Phinehas.

Although I have no objection if one substitutes another label or rubric, I find the term "Zadokite" to fit well the upper-echelon priests that HS wants to elevate.

Texts in Ezekiel, such as 40:44–46, seem to make this equation. Further, 1 Chr 6:1–15 (MT 5:27–41), without mentioning other lineage branches, traces the chief priesthood of Jerusalem down from Eleazar and Phinehas through Zadok to Zadokite descendants (v. 8; MT 5:34). (See also 1 Chr 6:53 [MT 6:38].) Phinehas's line leads to the Zadokites, not to any other named priests. Cross (1973, 208) thus rightly speaks of "the victory of the Zadokites," "the dominant Aaronite family." The conclusion of Rooke (2000, 52) is reasonable, that in Numbers 25 "Phinehas is represented by implication as the ancestor of the Zadokites."

The term "Zadokite" should not be considered a transient, idiosyncratic moniker characterizing a single tendentious layer of Ezekiel 40–48. The conclusions of Alice Hunt (2006) appear to me overstated. Thus, O'Hare (2010, 123, 138) argues that at least some of the pluses in the Hebrew source text (*Vorlage*) of LXX Ezekiel 40–48 stem from an ongoing Zadokite priesthood. He suggests situating the pluses "in Zadokite priestly circles as evidence of continued study and contemplation of Ezekiel" (192). Certainly, no matter their identity, the Greek scribes supplementing Ezekiel expressed an *increased* interest in "Zadokites," perhaps in the third century BCE (89, 122, 137).

Sectarian literature among the Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS, 1QSa, 1QSb, 4Q174) may also attest to the Zadokites' ongoing significance in early Judaism (see, e.g., H. C. Kim, 2014). The Damascus Document (see CD 4) names three separate groups: the "priests," the "Levites," and the "sons of Zadok." Like Ezekiel 40–48, the scrolls tend to speak generically of "priests," that is, sons of Aaron, but they also speak of Zadokites as a key inner-Aaronide lineage and at points emphasize the group's dominant, leadership role (see Hempel 2009). Note, however, that not all scholars agree that the "sons of Zadok" in the scrolls represent an actual continuation of the Zadokite priestly lineage. John J. Collins (2010, 46–48), for example, understands this phrase as an honorific title in the scrolls.

For myself, I continue to find compelling the view that a priestly lineage identifying its founder as David's chief priest Zadok held a high-status clerical position at Jerusalem's preexilic temple throughout the monarchic era. Ezekiel and other members of the lineage were active in Babylonian exile, and the same priestly line at times assumed leadership of the sectarian movement of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The presiding role of these priests traces to Solomon's elevation of Zadok after dismissing Abiathar, the other of David's chief priests (2 Sam 20:25; 1 Kgs 1:7–8, 41–45; 2:26–27). First Chronicles 6:50–53 and 24:31 trace Zadok's ancestry to Eleazar, Aaron's son. On the historicity of this ancestry, see Olyan (1982, 177–93). For further discussion, see Tuell (2009, 288, 313).

IV.

The Thinking and Theology of Ezekiel 38–48

If theology yearns for transcendent perspectives—access to Sheol's depths and glimpses of history's end—then Ezekiel's book is a theologian's gold mine. At Ezek 8:3 the

prophet peers across time to observe an Asherah that King Manasseh set up (2 Kgs 21:7) but that had been removed by his own time (2 Kgs 23:6). Later, the prophet's visionary gaze penetrates the depths of the underworld (Ezek 32:17–32), where Assyria lies in the uttermost recesses of the pit (32:22–23; cf. Isa 14:15). Later still, Ezekiel 38–39 describes earthly reality invaded by the chaos monster Gog, with whom God grapples with hooks in the jaws (Ezek 38:4). Across mythologies, half-imagined denizens of darkness wriggle away their lives in such crevasses as Gog's cavern, deep in the roots of Mount Zaphon (Ezek 38:15 NABR). Thus, J. R. R. Tolkien's Balrog dwells deep in the Mines of Moria.

Upon reflection, it appears fully natural that a millennial imagination first arose in Israel within the Ezekiel group and its wider circle of adherents (e.g., Zechariah; Sweeney 2005, 239–40, 243). Richly educated for duty as a Zadokite central priest of Jerusalem, Ezekiel exhibits sweeping familiarity with world mythologies and archetypes, which form the necessary building blocks of millennial visions (Boadt 1996, 219). His priestly education may have begun as early as age three (Haran 2008, 214).

Ezekiel is powerfully perceptive, right-brained, and endowed with a prophetic visionary's capacity to peer beyond observable reality and perceive transhistorical structures and truths. These he communicates to us by employing mythic and archetypal language and images. Consider Gog of Magog. A Balrog eschatologized, he is at once both mythic and realistic. When a visionary's eye sees a Balrog archetype appear incarnate within terrestrial reality as Gog, a proto-apocalyptic revelation has occurred. Certainly Revelation, a full-blown apocalypse, had no doubt that Gog was an end-time fiend (see Rev 20:7–8).

Ezekiel's visions perceive boundaries overturned. He experiences a sort of "parallel universe," encountering God's bodily Presence in Babylonia (chapters 1–3) when it cannot yet have left Jerusalem (see Ezek 11:23). Later, he envisions mythic and terrestrial realities coalescing in Gog of Magog, an end-time monster (chapters 38–39). Perhaps most memorably, dead souls breathe again in "Dry Bones Valley" (chapter 37). The latter vision of rushing, resurrecting life immediately raises a core Ezekielian emphasis.

Though *not* yet apocalyptic, the metaphor in Ezekiel 37 of resurrected bones (and I do not claim it is more than a metaphor) envisions life from God bursting all boundaries. This imagination gainsays biological accounts of life, which define it in relation to death and emphasize self-preservation. Such accounts have always failed to encompass the meaning of God's own living reality. God's life "inhabits eternity" (Isa 57:15), where death sets no limits, ends no lives (Hab 1:12). As Ps 90:1–2 declares, "Lord . . . from everlasting to everlasting you are God" (also see Pss 93:2 and 102:27).

God's *living* reality, God's nature as the living font of life, is foundational for the Zadokites and central in Ezekiel 38–48. As with other Ezekielian themes, the certainty of a *living* God is no innovation but traces back to Ezekiel's HS sources. Numbers 16:22 and 27:16 (both HS) understand God as "Source of the breath of all flesh" (NJPS), "who gives breath to all living things" (NIV). Echoing such HS texts, Ezek 18:4 reaffirms God's ownership and generation of all life. Ezekiel's God passionately desires life for all, even the wicked (Ezek 18:23, 32; 33:11). The theme of *life* as an intrinsic good recurs repeatedly in Ezekiel. Note especially God's repeated exhortation to Daughter Jerusalem to "Live!" in Ezek 16:6 (see NJPS, ESV).

In Ezekiel, there is no bedrock firmer than God's own life, which God partially shares with creation in granting life on earth. God's own life is the foundation upon which God makes oaths (Ezek 5:11; 14:16, 18, 20; 16:48; 17:16, 19; 18:3; 20:3, 31, 33; 33:11, 27; 34:8; 35:6, 11). God-emanating life flows out from God's throne like water from a font. Streaming forth, God's cosmic river brings life as it distends (Ezek 47:9).

How God's self brims with life is earlier attested in Ezekiel's book by the dynamic interconnection of the cherubim and the wheels beneath God's throne. Strikingly, the life breath of these cherubim extends outward from their bodies to infuse the four wheels (Ezek 1:20–21, 10:17) representing earth's four corners (Schäfer 2009, 41; cf. Greenberg 1983, 57). As divine life breath flows into the wheels, the life power of God streams toward each compass point, spreading to all earth's corners.

In Ezek 37:9–10 cosmic breath, reminiscent of the potent, emanating breath of the four cherubim, whips in from "the four winds"—earth's four corners—and animates Israel's lifeless bodies (a visionary, metaphorical representation of exiles paralyzed by despair). That more than mere resuscitation of political or biological life is at issue seems clear from the reference in 37:14 to the imputation of God's spirit, which imparts enhanced, ennobled life (cf. 36:27, 39:29; Joel 2:28). Verse 14 intimates Israel's deeper, richer sharing in God's own life on the day of the Lord. The trope of resurrection here points to the power of God's divine life to burst cosmic barriers and unite the quick and the dead.

Ezekiel's convictions about the *living* God reverberate down through the history of theological reflection. Augustine writes that in God "to be and to live are not two different realities, since supreme being and supreme life are one and the same" (*Conf.* 1.6.10; Boulding 2012, 12). Maimonides too affirms that God and God's life are one: "The Life of God is His essence, and His essence is His life" (Twersky 1972, 385). Karl Barth elaborates the same view, expounding the bedrock primacy of God's living reality (*CD* II, 1, secs. 25–31, 263). He insists that the expression "Living God" is no metaphor. God's life is at least as substantial as human life. It comprehends both the transcendent and terrestrial spheres. The commentary will elaborate on the geometric embodiment of this conviction in the utopian temple, especially in Ezekiel's architectonic stress on threes and fours.

In Ezekiel, for God to be paradigmatically *alive* is for God to be holy. In the emphasis on sanctification in Ezekiel one should see nothing less than the living God cultivating life. Ezekiel 40–48 establishes a utopian sanctuary occupied by the Presence precisely as God's terrestrial bridgehead in a battle on behalf of life. Jacob Milgrom (1991, 46) rightly insists that in all such priestly visions, "holiness stands for life."

God's Presence, the *kābôd,* takes up a localized solidarity with Israel (Ezek 43:4, 7; 44:4). Israel's life develops in relation to God's own life as the people bask in God's Presence and become increasingly holy to God (Lev 19:2 HS; see also Lev 20:7–8, 26). It matures as they emulate God, practicing God's holy laws. In this connection, the gloss in Ezek 33:15 on the laws of the Holiness Code (see Lev 19:13) is telling (cf. also Ezek 18:9; 20:11, 13, 21). Echoing HS in Lev 18:5, it calls them "statutes of life."

In Ezekiel 40–48 the dazzling holiness of deity has a negative as well as a positive face. *Negative holiness* manifests itself when the burning power of the pure brightness of deity is not respected (e.g., Ezek 42:14, 44:19, 46:20). Savran (2005, 193) rightly speaks of a "lethal aura" pertaining to God's sanctuary and service. Zadokite texts properly

temper Israel's contact with the numinous (e.g., Exod 34:35 HS), but only so that the people may grow in sanctity *safely.* Safe approaches to God are encouraged. As Knohl (1995, 180) puts it: "Israelites may draw near to God and attain higher levels of holiness." He argues that HS never presumes, however, that Israel can "arrive" at ideal holiness. Olyan (2000, 174 n. 3), however, disputes the claim that HS considers Israel's holiness as only "potential" and "predicated on obedience." HS, rather, states that YHWH is assuredly at work sanctifying Israel. There is, in HS, a mix of "a call to holiness and statements of fact about it" (174 n. 3).

With dazzling purity in their midst, the people of God maintain purity and strive for increasing sanctification (Lev 15:31, 17:16; Num 19:13, 20, all HS; language foreign to PT, see Knohl 1995, 185). At the same time, as the detailed textual studies of this commentary argue, the *holiness* of the indwelling Presence actually extends beyond the sanctuary to affect Israel for the good. The texts call Israel to holiness while at the same time the divine Presence, at God's own initiative, continually sanctifies the people. The insights of Olyan (2000, 173–74 n. 3) on these matters are worth quoting directly:

> I assume that an idiom such as "I, YHWH, sanctify you" (*ʾănî yhwh měqaddiškem*), which occurs in Exod 31:13; Lev 20:8; 21:8; 22:32, indicates that Israel is holy as a result of YHWH's initiative, just as *kî qādôš hûʾ lēʾlōhāyw* indicates the holiness of the priest in Lev 21:7. Obviously, I cannot accept the position of scholars such as Milgrom, who argue that the holiness of Israel in H is only potential and predicated on obedience to commandments. The idiom *ʾănî yhwh měqaddiškem* seems rather to suggest that Israel is continually being sanctified by YHWH (cp. the similar idiom in Lev 21:23, concerning the sanctuary, which is surely holy).

Through close readings of texts in the commentary that follows, I argue for understanding the holiness of the Presence to seep out of the temple and spread widely, transforming and sanctifying both the people and the land of Israel. My interpretation represents a significant corrective over against the commonplace view that Ezekiel 40–48 is mostly interested in sealing off God's holiness and God's holy priests from ordinary life. As noted, the utopia's *unwalled* inner court and *unwalled* temple building signify the vision's aim of opening up to all Israel the life-giving power of a resident God.

Claims that Ezekiel excludes common Israelites from the benefits of holiness do not fit the book's assumptions. For the Zadokites, the temple mount is a holy cosmic center (Ezek 5:5, 40:2) but so is the entire land. Ezekiel emphasizes the plural phrase "mountains of Israel" (6:2, 3; 19:9; 33:28; 34:13, 14; 35:12; 36:1, 4, 8; 38:8; 39:2, 4, 17), making all God's territory into "the holy [*qōdeš*] mountain of God" (28:14). He specifically refers to the entire land as an Eden realm in 36:35, a realm associated with God's holy mountain garden (cf. 28:13–14; see Note *Center of the earth* on 38:12). Later Zadokites reiterate the theme. Thus Zech 2:12 calls Israel the "holy land," and Zech 14:20–21 describes holiness infusing bells and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah.

Rather than simply isolate and protect sanctity, Ezekiel's temple organizes and orients surrounding territory as sacred space (Carvalho 1992, 2). Thus, the rhetoric of 42:15–20 describes a temple with perpendicular "compass axes" that situate it within a cosmic grid. Additional language in the passage speaks of the temple's four sides as *rûḥôt,* recalling the world's four cosmic "winds" (see 1:20–21, 37:9–10) and suggesting

that the temple possesses a sacral "valence," a capacity to interconnect with the outside (see Note *Side* on 42:16). Ezekiel 43:12 describes the entire sanctuary complex as "most holy," implying that zones and areas external to it possess a relative, derivative holiness (also see 45:3). Territories arrayed about the temple complex must be relatively holy zones.

A tiered system of graded holiness expands out beyond the stepped holy zones of the temple complex itself. Square geometry in the utopia represents holiness (see Stevenson 1996, xx, 26, 91). A holy matrix of concentric squares centered in a square altar (43:16) extends to encompass a square altar yard (40:47) and then the temple's square outer perimeter (42:20). Rather than stop there, however, in 45:1–9 and 48:20 the utopia's system of holy squares bursts beyond temple walls, reaching beyond the shrine's borders to include a great outer holy square (see fig. 5). This huge outer square includes the land's new central city, with its twelve gates welcoming all twelve tribes of Israel, who should benefit from drawing near to the Presence. The 12-cubit dimensions of the central altar's sides (43:16) likely also signal a valence oriented on Israel's twelve tribes.

The movement of sacrificial blood and flesh in Ezekiel 40–48 strongly attests to the temple's function of spreading holiness. As the blood and flesh of the people's well-being offerings (*šĕlāmîm*) move away from a liminal zone of slaughter (40:40) in different directions, ritual choreography interconnects the holy/numinous/inner and the public/profane/outer. The blood and fatty portions of the sacrifices go through the inner gatehouse, up to the central altar, and directly to God's presence, conveying holiness to the meat. The priests' manipulation of the *šĕlāmîm* blood identifies the meat going out to Israel as coming from God and God's holy altar (see Gilders 2004, 146). The now holy meat goes out to its owners for cooking in the outer-court kitchens (46:21–24), symbolically representing life's sooty, culture-packed, nitty-gritty corners (see Niditch 2004, 59).

Finally, the temple's transformative effect on the entire surrounding land of Israel comes alive in Ezekiel 47 (see the discussion of the river's probable sanctifying power in the Comments on Ezek 47:1–12). God's sacred river, flowing out from the temple, does more than merely infuse the land with fertility, for in Ezekiel's book life and holiness are inextricable. No, the sacred river replaces temple water that used to be taken from the large bronze basin in the courtyard. Numbers 5:17 calls such water "holy water."

Zadokite thinking about an expansive, emanating holiness of God differs from other priestly thinking. Thomas King (2009, 68–69) observes that in PT the presence of the Lord YHWH is within the sanctuary and possibly extends to the outer court, while in HS, the presence extends throughout the land. Everywhere, Israel is continually being sanctified (also see Olyan 2000, 121; Nihan 2007, 305–6; Janzen 2004, 105 n. 45). Knohl (1995, 181 n. 38) puts the observation this way: "In PT holiness is ritual and restricted to the Temple and the priesthood. Although all Israelites are commanded to be ritually pure, their observance of purity does not endow them with the qualities of holiness [whereas in HS, holiness *is* the aspiration of all Israel]."

Over against God's divine life, Zadokite theology accepts an antithesis—an antipode. As Koch (1982, 110) puts it, holiness has "an opposite pole"—"the unclean or impure," "filth in its foulest." Wenham (2002, 385) also speaks of "two poles": God/life/holiness and sin/death/uncleanness. Ezekiel, well-known for mythopoeia,

was at home in the binary oppositions of mythology. He employed techniques of polarizing/"splitting"—of making overarching dyadic and triadic distinctions—to create the hierarchical world of his prophecies. Since this commentary needs language to speak of the pole or front that opposes life, I have chosen to reference it occasionally with the rubric "Murk" ("gloom," "thick mist," *Düsternis* [German], "therkness" [archaic English]). I find some such term necessary to highlight the preternatural character of impurity and desecration in Ezekiel's book. Against the view of Milgrom (1991, 256; 1976, 392–93), what drives God's Presence from Israel is not mere human impropriety and immorality.

For Ezekiel, the front opposing holiness cannot be domesticated, reduced to something banal. Uncanny in character, it can build up in society like encrusted gunk in a pot (Ezek 24:6 NIV). It can attach itself to specific physical objects—Ezekiel's temple altar in particular attracts it (see Gilders 2004, 131; Stevenson 1996, 40). Like a preternatural ether, it leaks out of corpses to infect people (Ezek 44:25–27; Num 19:11 HS). It even enters containers not covered with lids (see the treatment of corpse contagion in Num 19:15).

Using the term "front" for this antipode of holiness is apt, for Ezekiel conceives of the antithesis at issue in spatial, territorial terms. Alien territories remote from the temple's ambit raise a "negative field of force" (Koch 1982, 110) against the shrine's holy influence. In Ezek 4:12, 15, an image of excrement describes the filthy repulsion, as Murk, of territorial space outside God's land. The image reappears later in Zech 3:3–4.

If Israel pollutes God's land with Murk/*Düsternis,* the people must suffer eviction, as Ezek 36:16–19 shows. The passage echoes Leviticus 18 (HS), which specifically pits life, which comes from God's statutes (v. 5), against ritual and moral impurity, which causes the land to vomit its dwellers (vv. 25, 28), spewing them into the wild. When in Zech 5:5–11 a personification of all impurity departs Israel to receive its own shrine in Babylonia, the territorial dualism of Ezekiel, received from HS, finds full expression. I find it noteworthy that at a much later time, in the New Testament, Paul reemploys spatial conceptions parallel to those of Ezekiel and Zechariah in texts such as 1 Cor 5:5.

The territorial antithesis at play in Ezekiel is not an example of ethnic chauvinism. Thus, Gog's murderous, unclean hordes (see Comments on 38:1–17) fall dead *within Israel,* but out of contact with the temple. Notably, they lie strewn on the open field, "out in the wild" (39:5). Here, the Zadokites understand the "wild" as unorganized territory, not integrated into the temple's matrix of holiness (Lev 17:5; see Note *Out in the wild* on 39:5). The same spatial polarity, assigning chaos/death/impurity to life's periphery appears in Ezek 32:1–5, where a crazed monster that thrashes in streams, fouling life's waters, ends up as dead flesh rotting out in the wild.

Ritual impurities within Israel, such as corpse contagion, skin disease, and menstrual blood, oppose and impede the divine life emanating from God. God's land is particularly defiled by *gillûlîm,* "idols" (NRSV, e.g., Ezek 36:18). These *gillûlîm* crowd out the living God, are themselves devoid of life, and, etymologically, bear associations of filth, waste, and degradation (Theocharous 2012, 91). Thus, even with regard to idols, Wenham (2002, 385) is correct that "the quintessence of uncleanness is death." As Milgrom (1991, 46) puts it, death is the "common denominator" of all forms of impurity.

Given the association of impurity and death, Ezekiel naturally views bloodshed as an intense source of pollution (e.g., 36:18). Since "life," for the Zadokites, "is in the blood" (Lev 17:11, 14 HS), murder generates a penetrating uncleanness. Paradoxically, however, blood is a cure as well as a threat. *Sacrificial* blood counters impurity's deathly taint. It "nullifies, overpowers, and absorbs" it (Milgrom 1991, 711–12). The commentary that follows describes the workings of sacrificial blood at the utopian temple's new central altar square and the power of the altar to draw impurity from the land and to send life and holiness out to all its corners and inhabitants.

This commentary corrects some scholarly misconceptions about sacrificial blood, including the idea that blood was merely a "detergent"—a life-infused, sacerdotal-strength, decontaminating agent. As Gilders (2004, 136) shows, the blood of the purification sacrifice is as much about restoring relationship with YHWH as about decontaminating the sanctuary. The blood comes "before the LORD" (Lev 4:15, 17, 18), directly engaging God, who renders forgiveness (Lev 4:20, 26, 35; see Gilders 2004, 137, 140).

The evocative language of HS about sacrificial blood is rich with layers of meaning and cannot be reduced to any one "flat" sense (see, e.g., the expansive rendering of Lev 17:11 in the NLT). Surely Milgrom (1991) is right that sacrificial expiation entails a battle of death with life. What wins the battle is "the blood, as life" (NJPS, cf. NABR). At the same time, however, the blood of the purification offering "carries" impurity/death as well as holiness/life (see Gane 2005, 173–74). As Gane shows, Lev 6:27 (MT 6:20) encapsulates the paradoxical dual role of the blood of animal sacrifices. The sacrificial blood gains holiness from the altar (Lev 6:27a), but at the same time it gains defilement from the offerer (Lev 6:27b; here, also consult Zohar 1988, 612). It is understood to remove impurity or evil from the worshiper. That is why a garment soiled with sacrificial blood must have the stain of sin or uncleanness washed out in a sacred place (Lev 6:27b). It is impure clothing, not holy clothing, that requires laundering (see Lev 11:25, 15:5). That is also why blood is never symbolically dabbed on the offerer of a sacrifice. The blood is understood to already heal offerers by bearing their defilement (Gane 2005, 175).

The Zadokites, including Ezekiel, have an anthropomorphic understanding of YHWH's Presence, the *kābôd.* (See, e.g., NOTES *Hid my face* on 39:23; *My food* on 44:7; *My table* on 44:16; and *My people* on 46:18.) This is a God whose feet are planted on the same earth as the feet of prophet and people (Ezek 43:7). This is an embodied deity, vulnerable to the desecration wrought by Murk/*Düsternis.* Texts such as Ezek 43:9 directly attest to the tension between God's residence on earth and Israel's contact with pollution. The dreadful tension helps explain the detailed concern about the architectural elements of the utopian temple in Ezekiel 40–48. There is a windowless and sealed inner sanctum in the temple, for example, to safeguard the Presence from the threat of death (see COMMENTS on 41:5–15a). In Jer 9:21, death personified breaks into houses through the windows. Here, compare Baal's insistence on a windowless palace in Ugaritic myth.

Ezekiel's God is a starkly emotional deity (anthropopathism). God is intensively "patriotic" about the Judean homeland, which the Lord refers to with "hot jealousy" as "my land" (Ezek 36:5). So too, God shares the deity Ningal's fervent concern about

feeling at home in the temple. In the "Lamentation over Ur" (sec. 7, lines 294–96), ca. 1925 BCE, Ningal laments, "Woe is me, in place of my city a strange city is being built; I, Ningal—in place of my house a strange house is being erected" (*ANET* 461; see Carvalho 1992, 73). Whether the "strange house" is erected by enemies or by Ur's own populace is unclear. Either way, the temple's configuration is a heartfelt concern.

Does Ezekiel's anthropomorphic language extend beyond metaphor? Does his God have a *body?* The question is not facetious. Pointing to the utopian temple, Ezek 48:35 declares, "The Lord is thither." The Presence remains substantively and singularly interconnected with the shrine on an ongoing basis (Exod 40:38; Num 9:15 HS; Ezek 9:3, 10:4, 43:7). Settling within a unique dwelling, the divine *kābôd* commits itself to dwell (*šākan*) amid the tribes of Israel alone (Exod 25:8; 29:45, 46; Num 5:3, 35:34, all HS; Ezek 37:27; 43:7, 9; cf. Zech 2:10). God has a "body"; it occupies one place at one time.

In understanding divine embodiment in Ezekiel 40–48, I am particularly indebted to Benjamin Sommer (2009), *The Bodies of God and the World of Ancient Israel.* Sommer has worked out insightful new rubrics for investigating God's presence in the biblical texts. He has described two different scriptural understandings of this presence. On one hand, Sommer outlines a model of divine "fluidity" in the ancient Near East, and on the other, he describes the understandings of divine presence in the Deuteronomic School and in the texts of the priestly literature, which reject any such idea of fluidity.

The Zadokites' vision represents a stance within the latter of Sommer's categories. For them, God has an actual body, in the sense of "something located in a particular place at a particular time, whatever its shape or substance" (Sommer 2009, 2). In HS, "the *kābôd* refers to God's body and hence to God's very self" (68). In an essay titled "Ezekiel's God Incarnate!" I describe Ezekiel's understanding of the *kābôd* as "a single, indivisible body known as . . . the glory of the Lord" (Cook 2015, 133).

McCall (2014) has also applied Sommer's constructs to Ezekiel. She is correct to describe Ezekiel conceiving of God "in surprisingly concrete and anthropomorphic terms" (378). She is right that God's *kābôd* is "God's own self" (381), not a mere accompanying epiphenomenon. Because she does not divide the priestly strand into its parts (PT and HS), however, she misses that HS shares this anthropomorphism. Further, she errs in finding both fluidity and multiplicity in the body of Ezekiel's God (McCall 2014, 378, 385; consult Sommer 2009, 38, 44). Her examples of fluidity in Ezekiel all assume (incorrectly) that the book communicates reality to readers "mimetically," that its visions consistently relate linear history and speak of that which is empirically observable. (For a full discussion, see Comments on 43:1–12.)

In Ezekiel 40–48, God has not assumed a biological form, but rather, God here commits to a scandalously particular, tangible indwelling of terrestrial Israel. Howard Schwartz (2010, 222) speaks of God's body as resembling our own bodies "though not one that shares [their] material characteristics." Webb (2012, 79) goes farther, speaking of a "material" deity but one not composed of the kind of matter that we have in our own bodies: "The Bible seems to be suggesting at times that God's body can be so different from our own that it appears to be made of a matter yet unheard of, but that does not mean it is immaterial."

V.

This Commentary's Translation of Ezekiel 38–48

I have found reading and translating Ezekiel 38–48 to be highly challenging. The text of the Gog prophecies was not the problem. Indeed, chapters 38–39 reuse so much earlier Ezekiel idiom that the translator familiar with the rest of Ezekiel's book has no real difficulty understanding the sense and rendering it in English. The difficulties of translating the text come with chapters 40–48. Milgrom (2012, 99) expresses a feeling I often had in working with this material: "There are as many interpretations as interpreters. This stems from too many corrupted phrases and unknown architectural terms in the text. The position I have adopted is, I believe, the simplest, though it is just as conjectural as all the others."

Tuell (2009, 284) expresses similar frustration with the vision's text: "The description and measurement follow a repetitive pattern, as is evident even from reading these chapters in English. The monotonous repetition . . . together with . . . use of obscure architectural terms, has understandably resulted in scribal errors, so that chapters 40–42 have not been well preserved in the tradition (nor is the LXX much help here, as often the Greek seems to be wrestling with the same text we have before us; see Block [1998], 494)."

Lest anyone read too much into Tuell's final comment on the Septuagint, I should stress that the LXX and other witnesses often *do* help in recovering a better Hebrew text of the utopian vision. True, the LXX translators' handling of technical terms usually tells us more about their own Greek architectural world than the nature of the Ezekiel authors' original understandings. In various other cases, however, the LXX makes better sense than erroneous MT readings. The text of Ezek 40:44–46, discussed above, is a prime example. Verse 44 should place the Zadokites' chamber to the *south* (LXX; cf. NABR, NIV), not the "east" (MT; cf. NJPS, NRSV). (See Note *South* on 40:44.)

A similar error in the MT, where the LXX clearly has the better text, occurs in Ezek 42:10, where again the best reading is "south" (LXX) rather than "east" (MT). Verse 12 confirms that the chambers at issue are on the temple's south side. Of course, even when the MT offers a fully adequate sense, the LXX can suggest an equally good, or better, underlying Hebrew text (*Vorlage*). O'Hare (2010, 37) gives some simple examples.

As Milgrom, Tuell, and many others have noted, moving from earlier texts of Ezekiel's book into the utopian vision of Ezekiel 40–48, translators soon find themselves up against formidable challenges. Only eleven verses into the vision, one discovers how confusing the text's use of the terms "length" and "width" can sometimes be. In v. 11, the guide makes two north-south measurements and refers to the first as *rōḥab* (CEB: "width") and the second as *ʾōrek* (CEB: "length")! No wonder NABR, ESV, NIV, and CEB all misunderstand the verse. Even Rashi could—and did—get turned around.

The text uses jargonlike syntax and Hebrew technical terms about architecture and building construction almost from the start of the vision. For example, a phrase involv-

ing the noun "house," *mēhabbayit,* is used to indicate the architectural orientation of gate towers: "houseward" (40:7; NRSV: "at the inner end"). The language is often cryptic and elliptical, leaving the conscientious translator puzzling for hours. (Readers will find the details of all this cited in the Notes.) Because the translation style of many modern English versions does not allow them to do much amplification of cryptic technical jargon, Ezekiel 40–48 makes less than clear sense for many contemporary readers.

Most modern biblical scholars spend much more time in libraries than in construction zones and experience a learning curve discovering the difference between, for example, a jamb, a pilaster, a pier, and an arching wall. Or again, what are the specific distinctions, if any, between a porch, a portico, a vestibule, and an entry room? In both cases, piers on one hand and porches on the other, various English translations have adopted all of the options just named and more besides.

And, of course, what Ezekiel had in mind in using technical architectural terms may differ greatly from what such terms mean in modern construction. Ancient texts and artifacts often help illustrate Ezekiel's technical descriptions, but even so, the translator is sometimes left with only probable meanings or with a variety of equally plausible possibilities. So too, Ezekiel sometimes frustratingly uses the same Hebrew technical term for demonstrably different architectural features. Thus, there are two separate sections of the gate towers termed "threshold" areas (40:6, 7)!

Or again, note how the term *ʾayil* is applied to a thick "jamb-post" in Ezek 40:9 but seems to be an 8 ¾-foot "pier" in 40:10, and, in 40:14, 26, it is a towering "pilaster." So too, Ezek 40:48 clearly speaks of jambs, which are wide enough to be called side walls, while 40:49 appears to speak of pilasters, which stand astride and mirror large columns recessed between them. Again, the Hebrew term, *ʾayil,* is the same in both instances. Not only that, but in their plural forms the terms *ʾayil* (jamb) and *ʾêlām* (porch) sound so much alike that a confusion between the two erupts on more than one occasion.

In producing a translation for a scholarly commentary such as the Anchor Yale Bible, which has traditionally focused on exacting text-critical and philological work and close, formal translation, the idea of paraphrasing some of Ezekiel's Hebrew might initially seem inappropriate. A goal of translation, however, is to produce meaning in the target language, in this case, English. If one takes this goal seriously, a translation of Ezekiel's utopian temple vision cannot simply strive for a literal rendering or aim for a high degree of formal correspondence between the translation and Ezekiel's Hebrew.

The continual measurement by cubits, though nicely conveying Ezekiel's stress on harmonious proportion and symmetry, leaves most modern readers with no sense of scale. When we read that the wall of the temple compound is "one reed" tall (Ezek 40:5 NRSV), we do not get the sense that it is the height of an African bush elephant. So too, when we hear mention of a "threshold" (40:6 NRSV), we think of the bottom of a doorway, not a large room 10 ½ feet deep. When Ezek 40:7 abruptly mentions "recesses" (NRSV), we sense a lack of proper context and may imagine indentations or niches in the gatehouse walls, not 10 ½-foot-square alcoves for stationing temple guards.

The translation offered in this volume acknowledges that modern readers will need plenty of extra help making sense of Ezekiel's language. It translates ancient measures

into modern units and adds material in brackets to clarify cryptic references and elliptical syntax. It even paraphrases the text when necessary for intelligibility.

Instead of a reed of 6 long cubits, in my translation the guide holds a "measuring stick" 10 ½ feet long (Ezek 40:5). When Ezek 40:6 introduces a "threshold area," the translation adds in brackets that this is "a foyer area spanning the outer compound wall." When Ezek 40:7 presupposes information about guard alcoves that is not actually supplied until v. 10, a bracketed expansion gives the reader the needed context for proceeding: "On each side of the gatehouse corridor were three guard alcoves." Yet, even these efforts at aiding the reader through a greatly amplified translation provide insufficient access into the world of Ezekiel's temple vision.

Not too far into their work on Ezekiel 40, the first chapter of the utopian vision, translators almost inevitably find themselves vigorously drawing sketches, diagrams, and floor plans. Only through such diagrams is there any real hope of working out the book's descriptions and measurements. Only through such sketching and diagramming, with a good calculator close by, can one rule out contradictory meanings and impossible measures. Eventually, workable understandings of Ezekiel's descriptions of the temple compound emerge through such efforts, but with many individual details left ambiguous.

In researching this commentary, it soon became obvious to me that if I were to really help readers understand Ezekiel's text, the published work would have to provide ready access to diagrams, plans, and illustrations, such as the ones that I generated for myself during the years I spent in researching the text. That is why this volume contains ten figures, with many elements and locations specifically labeled. That is also why it includes several URLs that lead readers to images that I have placed online (see the Appendix). Please make the effort to access these online images, for pictures really are worth a thousand words.

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TRANSLATION

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Prophecy Against Gog

38 [1]The word of the LORD happened to me: [2]Human One, confront Gog, of the land of Magog, the coalition leader of Meshech and Tubal. Prophesy against him [3]and say: Message from the Sovereign LORD: Look, I challenge you, Gog, coalition leader of Meshech and Tubal. [4]I will turn you about, fix hooks in your jaws, and drag you out, and your entire army, horses and riders, all of them perfectly armored, a vast array, all of them with shield and buckler, wielding swords. [5]Upper Egypt, Ethiopia, and Put are with them, all with buckler and helmet; [6]Gomer, and all its troops, Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you. [7]Get ready; prepare yourself! You and the whole array mustered about you. Take charge of them. [8]As the time grows short, you will be called to battle; here at the final end you will invade a land recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a wasteland. They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them will be living securely. [9]You will advance; you will roll in like a turbulent storm, cover the land like a cloud, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you.

[10]Message from the Sovereign LORD: On that day thoughts shall cross your mind, and you will devise a sinister scheme. [11]You will think, "I will invade a land without defenses, I will march against those living quietly, securely—no walls circling any of their cities, no bars and gates." [12]You will come to loot and plunder, to unleash your might against wastelands now inhabited, against a people gathered from the nations, now acquiring livestock and possessions, living at the center of the earth. [13]Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its "young lions" will say to you, "So, you have come to seize loot! It is to carry off plunder that you have massed your array of troops! You plan to carry off silver and gold, to make off with livestock and goods, to haul away a killing in loot!" [14]Therefore, prophesy, Human One, and say to Gog, Message from the Sovereign LORD: On that day when my people Israel are living securely, will you not take notice [15]and come from your place out of the mountain crevasses of the north, you and many peoples with you, all mounted, a great array, a vast army? [16]You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud covering the earth. In the [present] final days I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when before their eyes I prove myself holy through you, Gog.

[17]Message from the Sovereign Lord: Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days about my bringing you against them?

Expansion of the Gog Oracles

[18]And it will happen on that day, when Gog invades the soil of Israel—utterance of the Sovereign Lord—that my wrath will boil up in my fury. [19]In my indignation and blazing rage I have decreed it: I swear that on that day a great quaking shall befall the soil of Israel. [20]The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the animals of the field, all the creeping things that scurry on the soil, and every human on earth will quake at my presence. And the mountains will disintegrate, the steep pathways will collapse, and every wall will tumble to the ground. [21]Against Gog on all my mountains I will summon the sword—utterance of the Sovereign Lord—each one's sword will be against his own comrade. [22]I will judge him with plague and bloodshed. A torrential downpour and hailstones, fire, and sulfur I will rain upon him, and his troops, and the many peoples with him. [23]Thus I will display how great I am, prove how holy I am, and bring the many nations to know me. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

The Fall of Gog

39 [1]Now you, Human One, prophesy against Gog and say: Message from the Sovereign Lord: Look, I challenge you, Gog, coalition leader of Meshech and Tubal! [2]I will turn you about, guide you along, and bring you up out of the mountain crevasses of the north. I will bring you against the mountains of Israel. [3]Then I will knock your bow out of your left hand, and make your arrows drop from your right hand. [4]You will fall dead in battle on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and peoples with you. I will serve you as food to every kind of predatory bird and animal of the field. [5]You will fall dead out in the wild, for I, I have spoken. Utterance of the Sovereign Lord. [6]Then, I will send fire against the land of Magog and against those living complacently on far-off coasts, and they shall know that I am the Lord. [7]My holy name I will make known amid my people Israel. I will not let my holy name be profaned again. Then the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

[8]Look, it is coming, it will happen—utterance of the Sovereign Lord. That is the day of which I have spoken.

[9]Then the inhabitants of Israel's cities will go out and use the weapons for fuel; they will light them on fire—buckler and shield, bow and arrows, javelin and lance. They will use them for fuel for seven years. [10]They will not need to bring in wood from the countryside or chop down trees in the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. They will loot those who looted them and plunder those who plundered them—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

Expansion of the Gog Oracles

[11]And it will happen on that day, I will set aside a place right there in Israel as a burial ground for Gog, the Valley of the Passers-On east of the Sea. It will stop up the route of those who must pass on. They will bury Gog and his whole mob of an army there;

they will call it the Valley of Gog's Mob (*Ge' Hamon Gog*). [12]It will take seven months for the House of Israel to bury the bodies, in order to purify the land. [13]All the people of Israel will help bury them, and it will be to their renown on the day when I show my glory—utterance of the Sovereign Lord. [14]Then they will detail teams continually employed in crossing through the land burying those passing on, interring any human remains still above ground, so as to purify it. They will begin their search at the end of the seven months of mass burial. [15]As those who traverse the land make their rounds, anyone who sees a human bone must erect a marker by it, so the gravediggers can take it to the Valley of Gog's Mob for interment. [16](A town nearby is called Crowd Town, or Hamonah.) So they will purify the land.

Sacred Feasting on Gog

[17]As for you, Human One, Message from the Sovereign Lord: Command every kind of bird and every wild animal: Assemble and come! Gather around my sacrificial feast that I am slaughtering for you—a great sacrificial feast upon the mountains of Israel. You should eat flesh and drink blood. [18]You will eat the flesh of champions and drink the blood of earth's leaders—rams, lambs, goats, and bulls, all fattened animals from Bashan. [19]So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, at my sacrificial feast that I am slaughtering for you. [20]You will gorge yourselves at my table with horses and riders, with champions and all kinds of soldiers—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

Israel Restored to the Land

[21]I will display my glory among the nations, so all the nations will see my sentence that I have enforced, and my hand that I have laid on them. [22]The House of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God, from that day forward. [23]And the nations will know that the House of Israel went into exile because of their guilt. Because they betrayed me, I hid my face from them, handing them over to their enemies, so they all fell by the sword. [24]As their defilement and their crimes warranted, I treated them, hiding my face from them.

[25]Therefore, Message from the Sovereign Lord: Now I will return Jacob, have mercy on the whole House of Israel, and be zealous for my holy name. [26]They will bear their shame and their responsibility for all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they live securely on their land with no one to make them afraid. [27]When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I will manifest my holiness in them for the many nations to see. [28]Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then gathered them back to their own soil. I will leave none of them in exile any longer. [29]I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the House of Israel—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

The Temple Compound and Gate Towers

40 [1]In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year on the tenth of the month—it was the fourteenth year after the city was struck down—on that very

day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me there. [2]By means of divine visions he brought me to the land of Israel, and he set me down on a very high mountain. Upon it to the south was what looked like a city structure. [3]When he brought me there—look: a man, whose appearance seemed like bronze, with a linen measuring cord and a measuring stick in his hand. He was standing at the [compound's eastern] gatehouse. [4]The man said to me, "Human One, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and note well all that I am about to show you. That is why you have been brought here: to be shown. Declare all that you are about to see to the House of Israel."

[5]And look: a wall on the outside of the temple compound all around. The length of the measuring stick in the man's hand was 10 ½ feet (based on a measuring standard of a cubit and a handbreadth [that is, 18 inches plus 3 inches]). He measured the thickness of the wall as 10 ½ feet, and its height as 10 ½ feet.

[6]Then he went into the east gatehouse complex, ascending its front steps. He measured the threshold area of the gate [that is, the foyer area spanning the outer compound wall] as 10 ½ feet deep [front to back]. [7][On each side of the gatehouse corridor were three guard alcoves.] Each alcove was 10 ½ feet square, with a distance between them [along the corridor's walls] of 8 ¾ feet. [Beyond the alcoves, farther along the gateway passage,] the gatehouse's [second, inner] threshold area was 10 ½ feet deep. This is the area leading to a [final area, an] entry porch [or narthex,] oriented on the *inside* of the temple compound. [8]Then he measured the porch/narthex itself (the one facing the inside of the temple compound) as 10 ½ feet deep. [9]Now, he measured the [full, inclusive length of the] porch/narthex of the gatehouse as 14 feet deep, since its jamb-posts were 3 ½ feet thick. (Now the porch/narthex of the gatehouse was located at its *inner* [western] end [opening into the temple courtyard].)

[10][Again,] inside the east gatehouse, there were three guard alcoves on each side, all three of the same size. The piers between them were also identical. [11]He measured the entrance of the gatehouse as 17 ½ feet wide at the initial opening and 22 ¾ feet wide in the corridor. [12]A [protruding] curb running along the alcoves extended out 1 ¾ feet [into the corridor,] [forming a barrier] in front of them on each side, and each of the alcoves was 10 ½ feet square. [13]Then he measured the width of the gatehouse from outer ceiling edge of alcove to outer ceiling edge of alcove, 43 ¾ feet right across the corridor and through the alcove doorways. [14]Then he made out the height of the porch's pilasters: 105 feet. The gatehouse perimeter [bounded by the temple's outer courtyard] encompassed these pilasters, [which abutted] the courtyard. [15]The full length of the gatehouse corridor from the front of the gate at the entrance to the end of the inner porch was 87 ½ feet. [16]The guard alcoves and their piers had latticed windows on the inside of the gatehouse all around. The porch had them too. There were windows all around inside. On each pier were decorative palm trees.

[17]Then he brought me [through the gatehouse] to the [temple compound's] outer courtyard, and look, [worshipers'] chambers and a paved walkway made for the courtyard all around: thirty chambers [along the compound's outer wall, lining the courtyard,] opening onto the walkway. [18]The walkway abutted the sides of the gatehouses and its width matched their length. This was the Lower Walkway. [19]Then he measured the distance [across the compound's outer courtyard] from the front of the lower gatehouse to the perimeter of the inner courtyard, 175 feet. He then moved from the east gateway to the north side of the compound.

[20]Here was the north gatehouse of the outer temple courtyard. He measured its depth and width. [21]Its guard alcoves, three on each side, and its piers, and porch had the same measurements as the first gate; the gateway was 87 ½ feet long and 43 ¾ feet wide. [22]Its windows, porch, and palm tree decorations had the same measurements as those of the gate tower facing east. Seven steps led up to it, and its porch was on the courtyard's inside. [23]Like the east gatehouse, the northern one lay opposite a gatehouse of the inner court; he measured the distance from gate tower to gate tower at 175 feet.

[24]Then he took me to the south side of the compound, and look: a south gatehouse. He measured its piers and porch; they had the same dimensions as the others. [25]The gate tower and its porch had windows all around, like those previously mentioned. [Like the other gateways,] it was 87 ½ feet long and 43 ¾ feet wide. [26]There were seven steps leading up to it, and its entry porch/narthex was on the courtyard's inside. [The porch] had decorative palm trees on its pilasters, one on either side. [27][Opposite the southern outer gateway,] the inner courtyard likewise had a gatehouse facing south. Here on the south side, too, he measured the distance from gateway to gateway at 175 feet.

The Inner Court and Gatehouses

[28]Then he brought me toward the compound's inner courtyard, [to a spot] by the southern [inner] gatehouse. He measured the southern gatehouse; it was of the same dimensions as the other gateways. [29]Its guard alcoves, piers, and porch had those same measurements. There were windows all around both it and its porch. Its length was 87 ½ feet and its width was 43 ¾ feet. [30]The entry porches of the gatehouses encircling the inner court were 43 ¾ feet wide and [14] feet long. [31]The south gatehouse's entry porch faced into the outer courtyard. Its pilasters had decorative palm trees, and its stairway had eight steps.

[32]Then he brought me [through the southern inner gatehouse] to the inner court on the east side. He measured the [east, inner] gatehouse; it was of the same dimensions [as the other gate towers of the temple complex]. [33]Its guard alcoves, piers, and porch had those same measurements. There were windows all around the gatehouse and its porch. [Like the others,] its length was 87 ½ feet and its width was 43 ¾ feet. [34][Again,] its entry porch faced into the outer courtyard. There were decorative palm trees on its pilasters, one on either side, and its stairway had eight steps.

[35]Then he brought me to the north gatehouse [of the inner courtyard], and he measured it, and it was of the same dimensions as the others. [36]Its guard alcoves, piers, and porch had corresponding measurements; there were windows all around. Its length was 87 ½ feet and its width was 43 ¾ feet. [37]Its pilasters faced into the outer courtyard. There were decorative palm trees on its pilasters, one on either side, and its stairway had eight steps.

[38]There was an annex with an entrance accessible from the entry porch of the [northern inner] gatehouse. There they wash the entirely burned offering. [39]The gatehouse porch housed two pairs of tables, a pair on each side of the porch's [interior]. They were used to slaughter the entirely burned offering, the purification offering, and the reparation offering. [40]Outside the entry porch, [down] on each side [of the stairway] (as one goes up the northern gatehouse entrance), were two more pairs of tables.

[41][So, altogether,] there were four tables on each side of the gatehouse. Thus, there were eight tables in all, on which to slaughter sacrifices. [42]There were also four [additional] tables (of hewn stone) for use in preparation of the entirely burned offerings, each 31 ½ inches by 31 ½ inches square and 21 inches high. Implements were placed on these tables for use in slaughtering the entirely burned offerings and other sacrificial animals. [43]Meat hooks—3 inches long—were pegged all around the [inside of the gate-porch of the] building [for use in flaying the animals]. [Their] sacrificial meat was laid on the tables.

[44]Outside of the inner gatehouse, up in the inner courtyard, were two chambers. One flanked the north gatehouse, facing south, and the other flanked the south gatehouse, facing north. [45]And he said to me, "The chamber that faces south is for the priests who guard the duties of the temple [namely, the Aaronides]; [46]and the chamber that faces north is for the priests who guard the duties of the altar (these [latter priests] are the descendants of Zadok, the only descendants of Levi permitted to come near to the LORD to attend to his service)."

The Altar Square and Temple Building Proper

[47]Then he measured the yard [around the central altar], a perfect square, 175 feet on each side. The altar stood in front of the temple building. [48]He brought me to the entry porch of the temple building and measured each of the porch's jamb-posts. They were 8 ¾ feet deep on each side. The entrance [between the jambs] was 24 ½ feet wide, and the [front] walls [formed by the jambs] flanking the entrance were 5 ¼ feet wide. [49]The porch widened [beyond the entrance] to 35 feet; and its length was 21 feet. There were ten steps leading up to it, with a column on each side at the [front] pilasters.

41 [1]Then he brought me inside the sanctuary's main hall and measured the depth of the jamb-posts. The jambs were 10 ½ feet thick on each side. This was the depth of each jamb. [2]The entrance was 17 ½ feet wide, and the walls on each side of it were 8 ¾ feet wide. He measured the main hall's length as 70 feet and its width as 35 feet.

[3]Then he entered the inner room and measured the jamb-posts of the entrance as 3 ½ feet thick, the entrance's width as 10 ½ feet, and the walls flanking each side of the entrance as 12 ¼ feet wide. [4]He measured the depth of the room as 35 feet and its breadth as 35 feet, set at the end of the main hall. "This," he said to me, "is the Most Holy Place."

The Temple Building's Annexes and Surroundings

[5]Then he measured the [outer] wall of the temple building as 10 ½ feet thick. [There was a lateral, multistory annex of side chambers wrapping around the building's outer wall.] This [flanking] wing of chambers was 7 feet wide all about the building. [6]The side chambers—thirty cells—were in three stories, one above the other. There were [stepped] ledge-offsets running around the temple wall to support the [joists holding up the floors of the] chambers; the supports did not infringe on [the integrity of] the temple wall proper. [7]A wide winding ramp [within the side chambers around the temple building led] from first floor to second floor to third floor, for the structure around the temple had ascending stories on all [three] sides of the building. Because

[of the ascending stories], the width of the [insides of the] structure increased as it went up. One went up from the lowest story to the highest [only] by way of the middle story.

[8]Then I saw that the temple building was on a raised base all around. This terrace, which provided a foundation for the annex of side chambers, was a full measuring stick of 10 ½ feet high. [9]The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was 8 ¾ feet. [Beyond the wall] was an open area [of the inner courtyard] lying between the side chambers [10]and [a row of priestly sacristy] chambers [backed up against the open area's perimeter]. This open area was 35 feet wide, and it went all around the temple. [11]There were entrances into the side chambers from the open area, one on the north side and one on the south side. [The raised base had room for a] walkway 8 ¾ feet wide all around [the temple building].

[12]A [large, rear] building faced into the temple yard from the west. It was 122 ½ feet front to back. The wall of this building was [an additional] 8 ¾ feet all around. Its [north-south] width was 157 ½ feet.

[13]He measured the [sum total] depth of the temple building [along with its porch, annexes, and walls] as 175 feet. The [sum total length of the rear] yard area, [together with] the [west] building, and its walls was [also] 175 feet. [14]The width of the east front of the temple building together with the yard space [that flanked it at the shoulders] was likewise 175 feet. [15a]He then measured the [total, north-south] width of the [west] building facing into the yard at the temple's rear, inclusive of the terraced decks on each side, as 175 feet.

Wall Decoration and Interior Structures

[15b]The interior of the temple's main hall and its outer porch [16]were paneled [with wood]. The [hall's clerestory] latticed windows and their frames with recessed grooves had precious wood facing all around three sides down to their sills. Wooden paneling covered the walls from the floor up to the windows, extending to frame the windows. [17]Above the entrance [to the inner sanctum] and inside it, as well as outside [in the main hall], around all the walls inside and outside [the adytum], at regular intervals, [18]cherubim and palm trees were carved. [There was a patterned repetition of] a palm tree between two cherubim, with each cherub having two faces: [19]a human face turned toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a lion turned toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved all around the whole temple building. [20]From the floor to above door height, cherubim and palm trees were carved.

[21]The main hall had four-sided doorposts, and the doorway at the front of the [Most] Holy Place was similar. [22]The altar table [in the main hall] was wood, 5 ¼ feet high and 3 ½ feet square. Its corners, base, and sides were wood. The man said to me, "This is the table that stands before the LORD."

[23]The main hall and the [Most] Holy Place each had a partition with folding accordion doors, [24]a folding pair of panels on each side—one set of hinged leaves on one side and one set on the other. [25]The doors of the main hall were carved with cherubim and palm trees, like those carved on the walls. There was a [prominent] lintel-beam on the front of the outside porch. [26][So too,] there were latticed windows and palm trees on both sidewalls of the [temple] porch. The [temple building's] side chambers also had [prominent] lintels [over their doors].

The Priests' Chambers

42 [1]Then he led me out, by way of the northern [inner gatehouse], into the [compound's] outer courtyard. He brought me [westward] to the [sacristy] chambers nudged up against the [north side of the] yard [that lay around the temple building] and against the north side of the [west] building. [2][The sacristy's] façade [running west to east] at the north flank [of the sacristy complex] was 175 feet long. The [north-south] width of the complex was 87 ½ feet. [3]Tiered, terraced rows of rooms faced each other in the three-storied complex. [On one side] they overlooked the 35-foot-wide inner yard area [that lies just north of the temple building] and, [on the other side, and looking farther away, they overlooked] the paved walkway of the outer courtyard[']s perimeter]. [4]Between the rows of chambers was an interior corridor 17 ½ feet wide. It ran the [entire] 175-foot length of [that particular] block of chambers whose doors faced north. [5]Each of the [two] upper levels of chambers was narrower than the level beneath, due to a tiered construction that incrementally took away space from in front of them, [6]for they had a three-level[, terraced] structure, not a [straight-front,] pillared one as found in the courtyards. From the ground floor up, the rows of chambers were incrementally set back [with no columns for either show or support]. [7]There was a [freestanding] wall outside, projecting [laterally eastward] from those chambers that were near the outer courtyard, adding length to the façade [on the northern sacristy]. It was 87 ½ feet long. [8][It was needed,] since the chambers on the outer courtyard side were [only] 87 ½ feet long, while the [facing block of sacristy] chambers that were near the temple building were 175 feet long. [9]The chamber complex had an eastern entrance at its foot that accessed the courtyard space outside [the sacristy precinct—that is, the area just west of the northern gatehouse to the inner courtyard]. [10][The entrance was aligned] with the start of the [extension] wall.

On the south side [of the temple compound], nudged up against the yard [behind the temple building] and against the [west] building, was a [duplicate complex of sacristy] chambers, [11]with a [duplicate] passageway out front [between the two facing blocks]. The chambers looked just like the ones on the north side, with the same length, width, and exits. The dimensions and doorways mirrored each other. [12][Accordingly,] one accessed the southern chambers from the east, using an entry at the head of a corridor that ran parallel to the [complex's freestanding extension] wall.

[13]Then he said to me, "As for the north and south chambers nudged up against the [rear] yard, they are the [priests'] holy chambers. *There* the priests who draw near to the Lord shall eat the most holy sacrifices. *There* they shall place the most holy sacrifices—the grain offering, the purification offering, and the reparation offering. The place is holy. [14]Once the priests enter [the inner precincts], they must not go out again from the holy area into the outer court without placing *there,* [in the sacristies,] the liturgical vestments in which they officiate, for these clothes are holy. They must put on other clothes before entering the area open to the public."

The Measuring Completed

[15]When he had finished taking measurements of what was inside the temple complex, he led me out by way of the eastern [outer] gatehouse and measured [the compound's perimeter] all around [from the outside]. [16][He took his] measuring stick, and he mea-

sured the east side as 875 [feet], measured with the stick. Then he turned [17]and measured the north side as 875 feet by his measuring stick. Then he turned [18]to the south side and measured 875 feet by his measuring stick. [19]He turned to the west side and measured 875 feet by the measuring stick. [20]He thus measured [the temple's outside wall] on all four sides. The wall enclosing the compound [formed a square] 875 feet by 875 feet. It separated the holy from the common.

Return of the *Kābôd* of the Lord

43 [1]Then he brought me [back] to the gatehouse, the [outer] gate facing east. [2]And look, the Presence of the God of Israel coming from the east. Its sound was like the roar of rushing waters; the earth lit up with its dazzling glory. [3]The vision was like what I saw when he came to destroy the city [of Jerusalem], and like the vision I had seen at the Chebar Canal. I fell facedown to the ground. [4]The Presence of the Lord entered the temple compound by the gate facing east. [5]The spirit picked me up and brought me to the inner courtyard; and look, the Presence of the Lord filled the temple building.

[6]I heard someone speaking to me from the temple building, though [the] man was standing beside me. [7]And [the voice] said to me: Human One, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the children of Israel continually. The House of Israel will not again defile my holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their adulterous worship and by rites venerating their kings when they die. [8]When they placed their threshold by my threshold, and their doorpost beside my doorpost, with only a wall between us, they defiled my holy name by their abominations that they committed. So I consumed them in my anger. [9]Now, let them remove their adultery and their rites and pillars venerating their dead kings from me, and I will dwell in their midst continually.

[10]As for you, Human One, describe the temple [you have seen] to the House of Israel, so that they will be ashamed of their sins. Let them study the perfection. [11]When they are ashamed of everything they have done, apprise them of the design of the temple and its adornment, its exits and its entrances, and all its regulations and instructions. Write it all down as they watch, so that they may observe its entire design and all its regulations. They must come to terms with them.

[12]This is the charter of the temple on top of the mountain: its entire enclosed area is most holy. Look, this is the fundamental charter of the temple.

The Altar and Its Consecration

[13]These are the measurements of the altar: The trench [a channel or gutter around the altar] is 21 inches [deep] and 21 inches wide, with a curb 9 inches wide at its edge. The height of the altar is as follows: [14]From the trench in the ground the altar rises 3 ½ feet to the lowest ledge, which is 21 inches wide [all around the altar]. From the lower ledge the altar rises 7 feet to the upper ledge, which is also 21 inches wide. [15]The hearth [the top level for burning sacrifices] is another 7 feet up. Four horns project upward from the [corners of the] hearth. [16]Now the hearth is square with four equal sides, 21 feet by 21 feet. [17]The [upper] ledge also is square, 24 ½ feet by 24 ½ feet, with an outer curb, 10 ½ inches [high]. [There is a second, upper] surrounding channel [cut in the upper

ledge]. [Inclusive of the upper curb, it is] 21 inches [wide] all around. There are steps ascending the east side of the altar.

18Then he said to me: Human One, Message from the Sovereign LORD: These are the regulations for the altar when it is prepared for offering burned offerings on it and for dashing blood against it. 19At that time, you shall give a bull of the herd for a purification offering to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who may draw near to serve before me—utterance of the Sovereign LORD. 20Take some of its blood and put it on the four horns [of the altar], the four corners of the [upper] ledge, and all around the curb [on the ledge], and so cleanse it and make atonement for it. 21Then take the [carcass of the] bull selected as the purification offering; it shall be burned at the designated place of the temple outside the sanctuary precinct.

22On the second day, you shall offer a male goat without blemish for a purification offering. The altar shall be cleansed [again], as it was cleansed with the bull. 23When you have finished cleansing, offer [another] bull of the herd without blemish and an unblemished ram from the flock. 24Present them before the LORD, and the priests shall throw salt on them and offer them as an entirely burned offering to the LORD. 25For seven days you shall provide every day a goat for a purification offering; also a bull of the herd and a ram from the flock, both without blemish, shall be provided. 26For seven days atonement shall be made for the altar and it shall be cleansed. Thus shall it be consecrated. 27At the end of that time, from the eighth day on, the priests will sacrifice your entirely burned offerings and your communion offerings on the altar, and I will accept you—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

The Outer East Gatehouse Sealed

44 1Then [the man] brought me back [headed outside] the temple complex by way of its outer east gatehouse, but it was shut. 2And the LORD said to me: This gatehouse must remain shut; it will never again be opened. No one will ever pass through it, because the LORD, the God of Israel, has passed through it. Therefore, it will remain shut. 3But the *Nasi* [the ruling chieftain], he shall sit in it as chieftain to eat a [ritual] meal before the LORD. He is to enter and leave by way of the porch of the gatehouse.

Ordinances for Priests and Levites

4Then he brought me by way of the north gatehouse to the front of the temple building proper. As I watched—look, the Presence of the LORD was [still] filling the LORD's temple building, and I fell facedown to the ground. 5Then the LORD said to me: Human One, pay attention, watch closely and listen carefully to everything I tell you concerning all the regulations of the LORD's temple and all its instructions. Pay attention to the access to the temple through all the precinct's portals.

6Say to the rebellious ones, to the House of Israel: Message from the Sovereign LORD: I have had it with you! Away with all your detestable practices, O House of Israel, 7[culminating] when you ushered in outsiders [to the priesthood], uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my [temple's raised,] priestly zone to profane it, even my house, as you presented my food, the fat and the blood [of my sacrifices on the altar]. You[, O Israel,] have broken my covenant with all your detestable

practices. [8]You have not safeguarded my holy offerings, but had them[, the outsiders,] keep charge of my service in my priestly zone for you.

[9]Message from the Sovereign Lord: As for all outsiders [to the priesthood], no outsiders at all among all Israelites, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter my priestly zones—no outsiders [10]except the Levites, who abandoned me, straying off after their dung when Israel went astray from me. They shall bear their "punishment." [11]They will be ministers in my temple compound, having oversight at the [inner] temple gate towers and serving in the temple complex. [There, in the inner gatehouses,] they will be the ones who will slaughter the entirely burned offerings and sacrifices for the people, and they will be the ones who will attend on the people and minister to them.

[12]Because they ministered to them by conducting their dung worship, and became a sinful obstacle to the House of Israel, therefore I have raised my hand [in oath] against them—utterance of the Sovereign Lord—that they shall bear their "punishment." [13]They may not approach me to officiate for me as priests. They may not approach any of my holy offerings, the most sacred offerings. They must bear their shame and [the consequences of] their detestable practices, which they have committed, [14]so I am determined to appoint them to preside over the duties of the temple complex, all of its ritual service and all that is done in it.

[15]The Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, however, guarded the duties of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me. They are the ones who will come near to me to serve me; and they will attend on me to present to me the fat and blood [of my sacrifices]—utterance of the Sovereign Lord. [16]They are the ones who will enter my priestly zone; they will approach my table to serve me. They will keep charge of my service.

[17]When exercising their vocation in the inner courtyard, [the priests] must wear only linen clothing. They must wear no wool while serving in the inner courtyard precincts and [when penetrating] to the temple building. [18]Linen turbans must be on their heads and linen undergarments must be about their hips. They must not fasten on anything that makes them sweat. [19]When they exit to the outer courtyard, to the people in the outer court, they must take off their vestments in which they have been ministering. Laying them in the holy chambers, they must put on other clothes so that they do not transmit holiness to the people with their garments.

[20][Priests] shall neither shave their heads nor grow long hair. They must keep their hair carefully trimmed. [21]All priests must refrain from drinking wine before they come into the inner courtyard. [22]They must not marry widows or divorced women. Rather, they may marry only virgins of Israelite descent (and widows who were married to [other] priests). [23]They must teach my people the difference between the holy and the ordinary, and show them the difference between the impure and the pure. [24]In any legal dispute they will serve as judges and decide the case according to the precedent of my rulings. They shall guard my teachings and statutes regarding all my appointed festivals, and they shall set apart my Sabbaths as holy. [25][A priest] must not become defiled by entering the presence of a dead person, although [priests] may defile themselves for a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, or an unmarried sister. [26]After his ritual purification, [the defiled priest] must wait seven days [before resuming temple duties]. [27]The [first] day he reenters the priestly terrace, that is, the inner courtyard, to minister

on the priestly terrace, he must offer a purification offering on his own behalf—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

[28]This shall be [the priests'] inheritance share: I am their inheritance portion. You shall allot them no land-holding within Israel; I am their "holding." [29]The grain offerings, the purification offerings, and the reparation offerings—these are [all] theirs to consume. Every offering set apart for God in Israel belongs to them. [30]The choicest first fruits of every kind and every kind of consecrated contribution, all of them, will belong to the priests. You will also give to the priests the first loaves of your dough, in order that a blessing will rest on your homes. [31]The priests must not eat any creature—bird or beast—that died on its own or was torn apart by predators.

The Land's Central Strip

45 [1]When you distribute the land by lot as [the tribes'] inheritance, you must set apart for the LORD a consecrated reserve/Terumah, a holy district within the land, 8 ⅓ miles wide and 6 ⅔ miles long. The entire area will be holy. [2]A square section within this land measuring 875 feet by 875 feet will be set aside for the temple complex, with an additional buffer of empty land 87 ½ feet wide around it. [3]Within the holy district, measure out an area 8 ⅓ miles wide and 3 ⅓ miles long, within which will be located the sanctuary complex, a most holy place. [4]This area will be a sacred portion of the land; it will be [living space] for the priests ministering at the sanctuary precinct, the ones drawing near to minister to the LORD [at the altar]. It will provide them a place for their houses as well as holy ground for the sanctuary precinct. [5][The other half of the holy Terumah, above the priestly area, also] 8 ⅓ miles wide and 3 ⅓ miles long, will be for the Levites ministering [at large] in the temple compound. [It will be] their holding of land with towns to live in.

[6]You will allot to the [land's central] city a holding of land 1 ⅔ miles long and 8 ⅓ miles wide adjacent to [and south of] the holy Terumah. It will be held in common by the whole House of Israel.

[7]The ruling chieftain will have space on each side of the holy Terumah and the holding of the city, adjacent to the holy reserve and the city's holding, on the west side extending west and on the east side extending east. His land's east-west width will correspond to that of the land's [tribal] territories. [8]This shall be his holding within Israel. My chieftains shall no longer oppress my people. Rather, [satisfied with this large holding,] they shall let the House of Israel have the land as [God allots it] to each tribe.

[9]Message from the Sovereign LORD: I have had it with you, chieftains of Israel! Get rid of violence and destruction and do justice and righteousness. Cease your evictions of my people—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

Weights and Measures for Offerings

[10]You are hereby commanded to use honest scales, an accurate dry measure, and an accurate liquid measure. [11]The ephah [the dry measure] and the bath [the liquid measure] shall have the same fixed volume, the bath a tenth of a homer and the ephah a tenth of a homer. The homer shall be the standard unit for measuring volume. [12]The shekel [the standard measure of weight] shall equal 20 gerahs. Sixty shekels shall equal 1 mina.

[13]This is the sacred contribution that you must relinquish [so that the ruling chieftain may provide for temple worship]: a sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat and each homer of barley; [14]the prescribed portion of olive oil, which, measured by the bath, is a tenth of a bath from each kor (a kor is 10 baths, that is, a homer, since 10 baths make up a homer); [15]and one sheep or goat from each flock of two hundred, from Israel's lush pastures. These will supply the grain offerings, entirely burned offerings, and communion offerings, to propitiate [God] for the people—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

[16]All the people of the land must join in offering this sacred contribution through the ruling chieftain. [17]It will be the chieftain's responsibility [using the offerings he has collected] to provide the entirely burned offerings, the grain offerings, and the liquid offerings at the sacred festivals, the new moon celebrations, the Sabbath days, and all other appointed assemblies of the House of Israel. It is he who will provide the purification offering, the grain offering, the entirely burned offering, and the communion offerings, to propitiate [God] on behalf of the House of Israel.

Regulations for Major Festivals

[18]Message from the Sovereign LORD: On the first day of [each] new year, [that is, in early spring,] you are to cleanse the sanctuary by sacrificing a bull of the herd without any defects. [19]The [head] priest shall take some of the blood of the purification offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple building, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the doorposts of the [east] gatehouse of the inner courtyard. [20]Repeat this ritual on the seventh day of the month for anyone sinning inadvertently or through ignorance. In this way you propitiate [God] on behalf of the temple.

[21]On the fourteenth day of the first month [of the year], you will observe the Passover, a feast of seven days. [During the festival] bread made without yeast shall be eaten. [22]On the first day of the festival, the ruling chieftain must offer for himself and for all the people of the land a bull for a purification offering. [23]And during the seven days of the festival—on each of the seven days—he is to offer seven bulls and seven rams, without any defects, as an entirely burned offering to the LORD. He is also to offer a male goat each day as a purification offering. [24]With each bull and each ram he is to provide a grain offering of 1 ephah [i.e., a large basket, half a bushel, in size], with a hin [i.e., a gallon] of olive oil for each ephah [of grain].

[25]For the Feast [of Booths], which begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, [the chieftain] shall make these same provisions through the seven days, the same purification offering, the same entirely burned offering, the same grain offering, and the same [gift of] olive oil.

Offerings at the East Inner Gatehouse

46 [1]Message from the Sovereign LORD: The east gatehouse to the inner courtyard shall be shut six working days [each week], but it is to be opened both on the Sabbath and at the new moon celebration. [2]The ruling chieftain, coming from the outer courtyard, will approach the gatehouse's porch/narthex and stand beside the doorposts of the gate. Then, [while he watches,] the priests shall offer up all his various sacrifices. Then

he shall bow low in worship there at the doorstep of the gatehouse and go back out; but the gate should not be shut until evening. [3]The land's people shall [also] bow low in worship at the entrance of that gatehouse before the LORD on the Sabbaths and on the new moon celebrations.

[4]The entirely burned offering that the chieftain will bring to the LORD on the Sabbath day shall consist of six lambs without defects and a ram without defects. [5]With each ram he is to bring a grain offering 1 ephah [a large basketful] in size, and with the lambs the grain offering is as much as he is able to give. For each ephah of grain he is to bring a hin [a gallon] of olive oil. [6]At the new moon celebration, [he will bring] a bull of the herd without defect as well as six lambs and a ram, all without defects. [7]With the bull and the ram he will provide a grain offering of 1 ephah each. With the lambs [the grain offering is] as much as he is able to give. For each ephah [of grain he is to bring] a hin of olive oil. [8]The chieftain must approach [the doorstep of the inner, east gatehouse] by heading [up the stairs] toward the porch, and he must leave by the same way he came up.

[9]When the land's people come before the LORD at the appointed holidays, those who enter to worship via the north gatehouse shall exit via the south gatehouse; and those who enter via the south gatehouse shall exit via the north gatehouse. You may not go out by the same way you entered, but must leave by the gatehouse straight ahead of you. [10]The chieftain is to be there with [the land's people], entering and exiting along with them. [11]So [to sum up the grain and oil offerings], at [all] the pilgrimage festivals and appointed holidays the grain offering with a bull or a ram shall be an ephah in size. With the lambs [the grain offering is] as much as [the chieftain] is able to give. For each ephah [of grain, he is to bring] a hin of olive oil.

[12]When the ruling chieftain wants to make [a personal, voluntary offering] to the LORD, [either] a voluntary entirely burned offering or a voluntary communion offering, the east gatehouse [to the inner courtyard] will be opened for him. He will provide his entirely burned offering and his communion offering in the same way that he does on the Sabbath day and then depart—only [in this case] the gatehouse is to be closed immediately upon his exit.

[13]Every day [at the temple], you will provide a year-old lamb without defect as an entirely burned offering to the LORD. You will provide it morning by morning. [14]Also, you will provide a grain offering with it morning by morning, a sixth of an ephah in size, along with a third of a hin of olive oil to moisten the finely milled flour. The presenting of this grain offering to the LORD is a continuing and permanent ordinance. [15]The lamb, the grain offering, and the olive oil are to be presented morning by morning, burned entirely as a daily ritual.

The Chieftain and the Land

[16]Message from the Sovereign LORD: If the ruling chieftain presents a gift to any of his sons from his hereditary land, the gift passes to those sons. It becomes their holding of hereditary land. [17]But if the chieftain presents a gift from his hereditary land to one of his servants, it belongs to him, [that is, the servant, only temporarily,] until the [Jubilee] year of restoration. Then it reverts to the chieftain. It is [the chieftain's] hereditary land and is for his sons alone [that is, it stays in the family]. [18]The ruling chieftain must not

confiscate any of the people's hereditary land, oppressively evicting them from off their permanent holdings. [Rather,] he shall endow his sons with an inherited patrimony from out of his own holdings, so that he does not run my people off their land, each from his rightful holding.

Sacrificial Kitchens

[19]Then [the guide] brought me through the entrance flanking the [north inner] gatehouse to the priests' holy chambers that faced north. And look, there was a place back behind them to the west. [20]He said to me, "This is the place where the priests are to cook [the meat of the] reparation offerings and purification offerings, where they will bake the grain offerings. [They will do it all here] to avoid carrying the sacrifices through the outer courtyard and endangering the people by communicating holiness to them."

[21]Then he brought me out into the outer courtyard and led me across to the court's four corners. Look! In every corner of the [outer] courtyard there was a small enclosure. [22][To be more specific,] in the four corners of the [outer] courtyard were four enclosures constructed to handle smoke, each 70 feet long and 52 ½ feet wide. The four were of the [exact] same size. [23]Each of the four [enclosures] had a ledge [of building stones] running all along [its interior walls], with places for cooking fires built underneath the ledges all around. [24]Then he said to me, "These are the kitchens where the [Levitical] ministers of the temple compound cook the people's well-being sacrifices."

The Sacred River

47 [1]Next [the guide] brought me back to the entrance of the temple building. Look: water was streaming out eastward from beneath the temple's elevated platform, since the temple faced east. The water was flowing down from under the southern side of the temple's [façade], past the south side of the [central] altar. [2][The man] then took me out [of the temple compound] by way of the [outer] north gatehouse and led me around on the outside to the outer gatehouse that faces east. And look: the water was gurgling out on the south side [of the gatehouse].

[3]As the man went on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off 580 yards [downstream to the southeast, about ⅓ mile]. He had me go through the water; the water came up to my ankles. [4]Then he measured [another] 580 yards and had me go through the water; it came up to my knees. Another 580 yards farther [downstream], he had me go through waist-deep water. [5]He measured 580 yards more, and there it was a river that I was not able to cross [by wading]. It was too deep to cross except by swimming. The water had swollen into what could be crossed only by swimming—an impassable river. [6a]Then he said to me, "Human One, are you seeing this?"

[6b]Then [the guide] brought me back, returning me to the riverbank. [7]When I got there, Look! On the banks of the river were very many trees, on both sides. [8]He said to me, "These waters are flowing out toward the eastern region and will go down into the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea—the sea of stagnant waters. Then the waters [of the Dead Sea] are healed [and become fresh]. [9]Swarms of living creatures will thrive where the double river flows. Fish will abound. These waters go there [down into the Jordan Valley] so that [the waters of the Dead Sea] may be healed [and become fresh].

Everything returns to life where the river flows. [10]People will stand fishing on its banks from Engedi to Eneglaim. The shores will have nets drying in the sun. They will catch an abundance of fish there of all kinds, a variety like that of the Great Sea [the Mediterranean]. [11]Its swamps and marshes, however, will not become fresh. They will serve to supply salt. [12]On each bank of the river all kinds of trees will grow to provide food. Their leaves will never wither and their fruit will never be exhausted. They will produce fresh fruit every month, because of their water source. It's out from the sanctuary that their waters come flowing. Their fruit will provide food and their leaves will be used for healing people."

Boundary and Allotment Instructions

[13]Message from the Sovereign LORD: Here are the boundaries of the land that all of you will receive as a hereditary possession for the twelve tribes of Israel, with the Joseph tribes receiving a double portion. [14]Take hereditary possession of it equally among yourselves, for I have raised my hand [in oath] to give it to your ancestors. This land falls to you by lot as a perpetual heritage.

[15]Here is the boundary of the land: On the north side, [the land's border runs] from the Great Sea [that is, the Mediterranean, eastward] in the direction of Hethlon, then through Lebo-Hamath to Zedad. [16][Then it will run to] Berothah and Sibraim, which are on the border between Damascus and Hamath, and [finally all the way down to] Hazer-Hatticon, on the border of the Hauran area. [17]So the [northern] border runs from the sea [eastward] to Hazar-Enan (on the [northern] border of Damascus), with Hamath's territory lying farther north. That is the northern boundary.

[18]The eastern border [picks up where the northern line leaves off, in the area] between Hauran's territory and that of Damascus. [It runs due south until the place] where Gilead and the land of Israel border one another, at which point the Jordan River forms the [land's major eastern] boundary, [a boundary that runs] down past the Dead Sea and as far south as Tamar. That is the eastern boundary.

[19]The southern border [runs southwest] from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, [and then along the] Wadi [of Egypt] to the Great Sea. That is the southern boundary.

[20]The western border [is formed by] the Great Sea, which sets the boundary [all the way north] up to the latitude of Lebo-Hamath. That is the western boundary. [21]Allocate this land among yourselves, among the tribes of Israel. [22]You shall have it fall to yourselves by lot as a perpetual heritage.

[Allocate the land] also among the resident aliens who are living among you and who have had descendants born here. You must treat them as native-born alongside the children of Israel. They shall have [land] fall [to themselves by lot] as a perpetual heritage in the midst of the tribes of Israel. [23]In whatever tribe the resident alien lives, there you shall assign him his landed heritage—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

Tribal and Holy-District Allotments

48 [1]These are the names of the tribes [of Israel] [and a listing of the bands of territory each is to receive]. At the northern frontier, Dan will have one portion [with a

northern border] running along the Hethlon road to Lebo-Hamath, [and as far as] Hazar-Enan (on the [northern] border of Damascus, [that is,] toward the north beside Hamath). [Dan's strip of territory extends all the way across the land,] [from] the east side [to] the west. [2]Asher receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Dan, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [3]Naphtali receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Asher, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [4]Manasseh receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Naphtali, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [5]Ephraim receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Manasseh, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [6]Reuben receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Ephraim, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [7]Judah receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Reuben, from the east side [of the land] to the west.

[8]The reserve/Terumah tract that you will set apart, [as instructed earlier,] will lie along the [southern] boundary of Judah, from the east side [of the land] to the west, 8 ⅓ miles long [north to south] and in width equal to one of the [tribal] portions (from the east side [of the land] to the west), with the sanctuary in the middle of it.

[9][In the midst of this section shall be] the [consecrated] reserve/Terumah [proper] that you will set apart for the Lord. It will be 8 ⅓ miles wide [east to west] and 6 ⅔ miles long [north to south]. [10]The holy Terumah shall be apportioned as follows: the priests [i.e., all the sons of Aaron] receive an area 8 ⅓ miles [wide] on the northern side, 3 ⅓ miles long on the western side, 3 ⅓ miles long on the eastern side, and 8 ⅓ miles wide on the southern side, with the sanctuary of the Lord in the middle of it.

[11]As for the [specially] consecrated priests, those Zadokites who carefully performed my duties, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites did, [12]they [the Zadokites] shall have [their own, individual] Terumah tract out of the [total holy] reserve of the land—a most holy tract—adjoining the area belonging to the Levites.

[13]The Levites [are also to have their own area,] alongside [and north of] the area of the priests. It is to be 8 ⅓ miles wide [east to west] and 3 ⅓ miles long [north to south]. All [these clerical tracts of land taken together] will measure 8 ⅓ miles in width and 6 ⅔ miles in length. [14]No part of [the holy reserve/Terumah]—the best part of the land—is ever to be sold or exchanged or transferred, because it is sacred to the Lord.

[15]The remainder [of the special reserve], 1 ⅔ miles in length and 8 ⅓ miles in width, is for common, nonconsecrated use. It shall belong to the [central] city, for lodging space and pastureland. The city itself is to be in the middle of it. [16][The city is a square with] these measurements: The north side will be 1 ½ miles, the south side 1 ½ miles, the east side 1 ½ miles, and the west side 1 ½ miles. [17]The city shall have open pastureland [surrounding it] extending 437 ½ feet [146 yards] to the north, 437 ½ feet to the south, 437 ½ feet to the east, and 437 ½ feet to the west. [18]As for the remainder of the strip contiguous to [and below] the holy reserve/Terumah, stretching 3 ⅓ miles to the east and 3 ⅓ miles to the west, the produce of these areas adjoining the holy reserve shall supply food to the city's workers. [19]The workers of the city, who come from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. [20]And so the entire reserve/Terumah [in the center of the strip between Judah and Benjamin], that is, the holy reserve together with the [central] city's holding of land, shall be 8 ⅓ miles by 8 ⅓ miles square.

[21]The areas that remain, to the right and to the left of the holy reserve and the city's holding of land, will belong to the ruling chieftain. Extending [eastward] from the reserve/Terumah, [in a strip that is] 8 ⅓ miles top to bottom, [all the way] to the [land's] eastern border and westward from the 8 ⅓-mile-long [western edge of the] reserve [all the way] to the western border [of Israel], it shall belong to the chieftain. The holy reserve and the sanctuary of the temple will be [right] in the middle of it [all]. [22][So too,] the Levites' holding and the city's holding of land lie between the chieftain's areas. [Exclusive of these holdings,] the chieftain possesses [everything] between the territories allotted to Judah and Benjamin.

[23]As for the remaining tribes, [which will be settling south of the lands of the temple, city, and chieftain,] Benjamin receives one portion [all along the southern boundary of the lands of the chieftain and the city], from the east side [of the land] to the west. [24]Simeon receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Benjamin, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [25]Issachar receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Simeon, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [26]Zebulun receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Issachar, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [27]Gad receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Zebulun, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [28]The [lower] border of Gad, on its southern side, [will run] from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, [and then along the] Wadi [of Egypt] to the Great Sea. [29]This is the land that you shall have fall to yourselves by lot as a perpetual heritage for the tribes of Israel. These are their portions [of land]—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

The New Central City

[30]These are the exits of the [central] city: On the north side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, [31]shall be gates of the city named for the tribes of Israel—on the north, three gates: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi. [32]On the east side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan. [33]On the south side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun. [34]On the west side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. [35]The [city's] circumference is 6 miles. From [that] day on, the name of the city is YHWH Shammah, "The LORD is Just Over There."

NOTES AND COMMENTS

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Prophecy Against Gog (38:1–17)

38 [1]The word of the Lord happened to me: [2]Human One, confront Gog, of the land of Magog, the coalition leader of Meshech and Tubal. Prophesy against him [3]and say: Message from the Sovereign Lord: Look, I challenge you, Gog, coalition leader of Meshech and Tubal. [4]I will turn you about, fix hooks in your jaws, and drag you out, and your entire army, horses and riders, all of them perfectly armored, a vast array, all of them with shield and buckler, wielding swords. [5]Upper Egypt, Ethiopia, and Put are with them, all with buckler and helmet; [6]Gomer, and all its troops, Beth-togarmah from the remote parts of the north with all its troops—many peoples with you. [7]Get ready; prepare yourself! You and the whole array mustered about you. Take charge of them. [8]As the time grows short, you will be called to battle; here at the final end you will invade a land recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been a wasteland. They were brought out from the peoples, and all of them will be living securely. [9]You will advance; you will roll in like a turbulent storm, cover the land like a cloud, you and all your troops, and many peoples with you.

[10]Message from the Sovereign Lord: On that day thoughts shall cross your mind, and you will devise a sinister scheme. [11]You will think, "I will invade a land without defenses, I will march against those living quietly, securely—no walls circling any of their cities, no bars and gates." [12]You will come to loot and plunder, to unleash your might against wastelands now inhabited, against a people gathered from the nations, now acquiring livestock and possessions, living at the center of the earth. [13]Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all its "young lions" will say to you, "So, you have come to seize loot! It is to carry off plunder that you have massed your array of troops! You plan to carry off silver and gold, to make off with livestock and goods, to haul away a killing in loot!" [14]Therefore, prophesy, Human One, and say to Gog, Message from the Sovereign Lord: On that day when my people Israel are living securely, will you not take notice [15]and come from your place out of the mountain crevasses of

the north, you and many peoples with you, all mounted, a great array, a vast army? [16]You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud covering the earth. In the [present] final days I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when before their eyes I prove myself holy through you, Gog.

[17]Message from the Sovereign LORD: Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days through my servants the prophets of Israel, who prophesied for years in those days about my bringing you against them?

Notes

38:1. *Word . . . happened to me.* The prophetic word formula marks Ezekiel 38–39 as an oracular subsection of 33:21–39:29, a macro-unit that includes five other oracles on Israel's rebirth following in the wake of Jerusalem's destruction (see Mayfield 2010, 116, 121). The rendering "happened" fits the Hebrew verb and intends to reflect how Ezekiel experiences the divine word as a concrete dramatic reality (Ezek 3:3; McKeating 1993, 52).

38:2. *Confront.* Literally, the Hebrew states, "set your face against." The phrase (cf. Ezek 4:3, 6:2, 13:17) expresses a threatening intention.

Gog . . . of Magog. As soon becomes clear, Gog is not a mundane figure of history but a "mythic-realistic entity," physically real but of mythological, that is, fantastic and archetypal, proportions. It is misguided for commentators to imagine that they can reduce him to an ancient or modern historical entity (e.g., make Gog a cipher or code term for "Babylonia" or "Russia"). Nevertheless, readers may rightly be curious as to the origins of the name "Gog." One popular suggestion is that Gog's name traces back to the seventh-century BCE Lydian ruler Gyges. Like Magog, Lydia lies far north of Israel in western Anatolia. (Gog is clearly resident in the far north; see Ezek 38:15, 39:2; NOTE *Meshech and Tubal* on 38:2.) Alternatively, the name "Gog" may be punning on the name "Agaku," one of Marduk's names in the Babylonian Enuma Elish. In Akkadian, the name Agaku resonates with a root about "fierce anger." Perhaps more likely, "Gog" may be a poetic construction based on the name "Magog," an ancestor of a northern (Anatolian) people, found in the Table of Nations (Gen 10:2; see Rashi). That is, the Ezekiel group could have understood the name "Magog" in Gen 10:2 to be a *mem*-preformative noun of location formed from the name "Gog" (Tooman 2010, 65 n. 35; Bøe 2001, 50–75; Rösel 2012, 313–15). Note that for the Ezekiel authors, the name "Magog" in Genesis 10 may have reverberated with Num 24:7, understood to mention "Gog." (In Num 24:7, the LXX and Samaritan Pentateuch speak of a coming ruler from Jacob "exalted beyond Gog." The MT, instead, has the archenemy as "Agag." See Rösel 2012, 310.) Numbers 24:7 would have attracted the interests of the Ezekiel authors, since the Balaam oracles, like the Gog prophecies, are about "the end of days" (Num 23:14; cf. Ezek 38:8, 16, 17).

Coalition leader. The Hebrew phrase "chief prince" here designates the head leader of a regional band of nations. Note how 39:18 speaks of multiple leaders of the earth within Gog's coalition. The LXX misunderstands *rōʾš* as a place name alongside Meshech and Tubal (REB, NASB, NKJV, and ASV have the same error). The Targum, Vulgate, and Peshitta, however, correctly understand *rōʾš* as a title, "leader" or "chief."

Meshech and Tubal. Ezekiel earlier envisioned the nations Meshech and Tubal (Assyrian "Tabal" and "Mushki," peoples of Asia Minor) rotting in Sheol (see Ezek 27:13, 32:26; Lilly 2012, 214). Like "Magog," they are listed in the Table of Nations in Gen 10:2 and represent enemy peoples from feared northern regions, the fabled terrain of evil (vv. 6, 15; 39:2; Jer 4:6, 6:22; Zech 2:6, 6:8). On the north as a demonic realm, and the mythological background of the fearsome "enemy from the north," see Bøe 2001, 86, 114–15.

38:3. *Message from the Sovereign* Lord. Prophetic messenger formulas at 38:3, 10, and 14 divide our passage into several parallel descriptions of Gog's invasion.

Look, I challenge you. The formula "I am against you" (*Die Herausforderungsformel*) is a challenge to a duel or to combat. It occurs also in Ezek 21:8, 29:10, 35:3, and 39:1.

38:4. *Fix hooks in your jaws.* The LXX lacks the first part of the verse, which depicts Gog as a sea monster. The clause, likely an editorial addition (Crane 2008, 146), reuses diction from Ezek 29:4, transforming the language into a picture of divine coercion (Mackie 2015, 167–68). As discussed below, the sea-monster language resumes in 39:2–5.

38:5. *Upper Egypt, Ethiopia, and Put.* The MT *pāras* (NRSV: Persia) probably signifies Pathros, that is, Upper Egypt, "Southland" (cf. Jer 44:15; Block 1998, 439 n. 79). Then, the countries of v. 5 represent a southern coalition aligning with the enemy from the north. Put is Libya, at least according to the LXX and Vulgate. One would expect Lud/Lydia along with Ethiopia/Cush and Put/Libya (cf. Jer 46:9, Ezek 30:5), but it need not be mentioned if the name "Gog" already brings to mind Gyges of Lydia (see Note *Gog . . . of Magog* on 38:2). According to Ezek 27:10, Tyre's warriors include troops from Upper Egypt, Lud/Lydia, and Put/Libya, and 27:14 adds that Beth-togarmah (see 38:6) supplied Tyre with chariots and cavalry horses. Lilly (2012, 214) argues that over against Papyrus 967 the MT furthers the intertextual relationship of Gog and Tyre seen here. In contrast to Papyrus 967, the MT names Meshech and Tubal (38:2) as associates of Tyre (27:13).

38:6. *Gomer . . . Beth-togarmah.* "Gomer" refers to the Cimmerians in Asia Minor (Gen 10:2–3). "Beth-togarmah," Assyrian "Tilgarimmu," was in eastern Asia Minor (Armenia). Both are far north of Israel. The sevenfold makeup of the enemy coalition represents the *totality* of the threat of chaos and evil. Just so, the coalition wields multiple weapons that take seven years to burn up (Ezek 39:9). Their corpses take seven months to bury (39:12, 14).

38:7. *Get ready; prepare yourself!* The double use of the root *kûn* signals the dreadful enormity of the coming battle. The tone rings with bravado—"Bring it on, Gog!"—in keeping with the language of dueling in v. 3. Rabbi Joseph Kara (ca. 1065–1135) sees great satire here: "Get ready, Gog—ready for your own downfall!"

38:8. *Final end.* As Brevard Childs (1959, 196) discerned, the idiom "latter years" here does not refer to the distance in the future of the end times but to the apocalyptic quality of the events the text describes. Also see Note *Final days* on 38:16.

To the mountains. On Ezekiel's use of the plural phrase "mountains of Israel" to refer to the entire Holy Land, see the LXX and Note *Center of the earth* on 38:12. Rabbi Joseph Kara, in the rabbinic Bible, nicely catches the cosmic connotation: "At the height of the world."

Living securely. This and other descriptors here of Israel restored by God from Babylonian exile echo earlier texts in the book: 11:17; 20:34, 41; 28:25; 34:13 ("gathered from the peoples"); 36:10, 33 (reversal of the homeland lying "waste"); and 28:26; 34:27, 28 ("living securely").

38:9. *Like a cloud.* The imagery refers to the thick gloom of the eschatological "day of the Lord" (see Ezek 30:3, 34:12; Amos 5:20; Zeph 1:15). Joel 2:2 contains the same motif.

38:10. *On that day.* The phrase is idiomatic for the eschatological "day of the Lord," the day of heaven's dramatic intervention in earthly history (cf. Ezek 29:21; Zech 12:3, 14:4).

38:11. *Without defenses.* The description of the land as undefended is rhetoric highlighting Gog's villainy, not a statement about literal reality (thus, Israel's cities are fortified in Ezek 36:35). This monster is a slayer of the defenseless. He is also arrogant: Gog believes his might is so great that Israel's cities *might as well* not be walled. Zechariah 2:4 (MT 2:8) takes Ezek 38:11 more literally than necessary, picturing Jerusalem as actually unwalled, like open fields (because of its bursting with people and animals and because it enjoys a protective wall of fire from God). In this, Zechariah 2 technically contradicts the ideal of a walled central city in Ezek 48:31–34.

38:12. *Center of the earth.* The LXX and Vulgate speak of the earth's "navel" (Crane 2008, 156; cf. Jub. 8:19, Rashi, and Radak), but in Judg 9:37, the word's only other occurrence, *ṭabbûr* refers to the land's *highest part,* the central hills. What is more, here in 38:12 *ṭabbûr* has cosmic nuances, suggesting earth's center, the primeval hill, the archetypal Mount Eden (*Weltberg*) linking earth to heaven (Ezek 5:5, 17:22, 28:14, 40:2; Zech 14:10; see Comments on 40:1–27). For Ezekiel, the temple mount is a cosmic center (Ezek 5:5, 40:2) but so is the entire land. Thus, Ezekiel uses the *plural* phrase "mountains of Israel," making all God's territory a mountain paradise (v. 8; 39:2, 4, 17; cf. 6:2, 3; 19:9; 33:28; 34:13, 14; 35:12; 36:1, 4, 8). He specifically refers to the entire land as an Edenic realm in 36:35, a realm associated with God's cosmic mountain in the Near East (cf. Ezek 28:13–14). Verse 12 particularly echoes Ezek 36:35, adopting its language of "desolate" towns restored and a desolate land become like Eden.

38:13. *Sheba and Dedan and . . . Tarshish.* All three locales were significant trading centers (cf. Ezek 27:12, 20, 22). The text portrays them as excited that Gog is about to invigorate the Near Eastern markets with new plunder.

Young lions. The LXX, Syriac, and Vulgate all read **kāpār* (village) instead of *kĕpîr* (young lion). *HALOT* suggests emending the MT's *kĕpîr* to *rōkēl,* a peddler or small retailer, a term that would parallel the mention of "merchants" in the verse. The latter is a radical emendation, but one that fits with the pairing of "merchants" and "peddlers" in Ezek 27:12–13, 15–16, 17–18, and 20–22. Crane (2008, 158) prefers the unattested *kērêhā* (her traders) as a simpler emendation. I have retained the MT text, which is the stronger, "more difficult," reading (*lectio difficilior potior*), while allowing the likelihood of a metaphor of aggressive peddling (cf. Symmachus: "destructive lions") and, perhaps, a pun with *kērêhā* or *rōkēl.* Rashi notes that shrewd merchants, like lions, roam rich country. The Targum (followed by Radak) also accepts the text as a metaphor, reading "all her kings" on the basis of Ezek 32:2 (cf. NJPS, CEB, NJB).

A killing in loot! The translation uses exclamations and paraphrase to express the tone of the rhetorical questions in the Hebrew, which intend to egg Gog on in his

invasion (see Note *Get ready; prepare yourself!* on 38:7). *Meşudat David* imagines the merchant nations crying out, "Here we are, ready to buy your loot!" They are devouring lions indeed.

38:14. *Will you not take notice?* The question is rhetorical. Given how badly Gog covets the cosmic center, its fecundity and its treasures (38:12), of course he notices that God's mountains are ripe for conquest. The LXX reads, "Will you not stir yourself?" (see the NRSV, NLT). Crane (2008, 160) suggests that the LXX is punning on the Hebrew (hearing *tēdāʿ* to suggest *tēʿōr*) and that its "interpretive wordplay" gets the sense right. The slumbering monster of 38:4 is awakening, becoming aroused (see the succeeding Note).

38:15. *Mountain crevasses.* The Hebrew phrase usually rendered "remotest parts of the north" can also mean "mountain crevasses of the north," specifically, "the recesses of [Mount] Zaphon" (NABR; see 1 Sam 24:3 [MT 24:4], Isa 14:15, Ezek 32:23). As noted in the Introduction (sec. 4), this verse along with 39:2 evokes images from across cultures of chaos monsters inhabiting tunnels and caves in the roots of mountains.

38:16. *Final days.* As at v. 8, the expression "latter days" or "latter years" does not point to the distance of the eschaton. Quite to the contrary, the original writers believed that the future (the end of time) is now. As in full-blown apocalyptic literature, the diction here is technical terminology for the time of history's culmination. The reader is on notice that this text is focusing on the goal and outcome of history.

Nations may know me. The unique form of the recognition formula here replaces the standard self-revelation ("I am the Lord") with the first-person object pronoun "me." As in 35:11, the wording demonstrates an interest not merely that the world know truths *about God,* but that the world be confronted *with God,* with God's self (see Evans 2006, 279). A textual plus in the LXX, "*all* nations will know," stresses the global scope of 38:2–16 (Crane 2008, 160–61). An *inclusio* in the MT similarly insists that the battle theater is cosmic, not a contained matter of Israel's defense. God's direct address to Gog in the vocative in both v. 3 and v. 16 drives home a focus on God's war with chaos (see Block 1998, 451).

Prove myself holy. The language of God showing the divine self as holy in the sight of onlookers is native to HS and Ezekiel (see Num 20:13 HS; Ezek 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 38:16). God's great acts of mercy and justice win for God awe and dread, the natural human reactions to the numinous. Greenberg (1983, 376) comments on the phraseology as follows: "By [God's] marvelous restoration of [Israel] in the future his holy majesty will be affirmed before all." He offers the translation "assert my sanctity."

38:17. *Of whom I spoke.* Verse 17 is transitional in the text's present shape. Whether or not it represents an editorial addition, its theme confirms that, like most proto-apocalyptic prophecy, the Gog oracles base themselves on a study of earlier Scripture. Anja Klein (2008, 138) speaks of Scripture emerging here as an actual authoritative corpus that can be cited and elaborated. We have already seen that earlier authoritative texts are present behind Ezekiel 38–39. Scholars wonder what specific Scriptures are in mind in 38:17, however, and have even pondered whether the question is looking for a negative or positive answer (Aalders 1951, 167; Block 1992, 170–72). The LXX and the Vulgate believe that preceding Scriptures have spoken of such an enemy and declare to Gog, "You are he!" The Hebrew originally may have had the same reading (cf. NABR,

NJPS ["Why, you are the one!"], NIV, NJB). As the MT stands, v. 17 matches the rhetorical questions of vv. 13 and 14, which all demand the answer, "Yes!" Later, Ezek 39:8 will leave no doubt that "yes" is the answer here as well. The prophets commonly expected an eschatological day of vindication (see 39:8; cf. 36:22–23) but generally described armies coming out of the north to punish a *sinful* Israel (e.g., see Jer 4:13–14). In Ezekiel 38–39 Israel is an innocent victim, a problem in particular for the common idea that Ezek 38:17 references Jeremiah's enemy-from-the-north tradition (see Jer 4:6, 6:22). More likely is a studied, divinatory reflection on texts such as Num 24:7 (LXX; see Note *Gog . . . of Magog* on 38:2) and Isa 14:4b–21, 24–27 (see the Comments). At the same time, Jeremiah's theme of an ominous northern threat forms important background material here, intensifying readers' responses to Gog's menace. Jeremiah's prophecies received fulfillment in 586 BCE (consult Renz 1999b, 118 n. 149), but this only confirmed worries that the northern realms could, without notice, spew out chaos at will.

My servants the prophets. As Tuell (2009, 266) notes, it is odd to think of Ezekiel himself speaking of prophets in this manner, which suggests temporal removal from traditional Israelite prophecy. Even if v. 17 was penned by later editors within his school, however, it need not be dated later than the early restoration era. Zechariah 1:6 uses the same phrase, *ʿăbāday hannĕbîʾîm,* similarly referring to an emerging corpus of authoritative, written prophetic tradition. As texts such as Ezek 3:1 show, Ezekiel himself was definitely engaged with this emerging idea of inspired, archived prophecy (here, consult Klein 2008).

Comments

Chapters 38–39 of Ezekiel's book are extraordinary. Consisting of a series of seven prophecies introduced by the prophetic messenger formula (38:1–9, 10–13, 14–16/17, 17/18–23; 39:1–16, 17–24, 25–29), these texts describe an end-time assault upon the Holy Land of a monstrous tyrant and demiurge, Gog of the land of Magog. Gog is not a mundane figure, but a "mythic-realistic entity," physically real but of mythological, that is, fantastic and archetypal, proportions (see Note *Gog . . . of Magog* on 38:2). Ezekiel's visions of heaven's radical intervention on earth, destroying chaos and evil, have long captivated readers. Substantial echoes of the chapters occur in subsequent Scriptures, such as in Joel, Zechariah 12 and 14, Dan 11:36–45, and later in Rev 19:17–21 and 20:7–10.

The echoes of Ezekiel 38–39 in Dan 11:36–45 form one of the most interesting reappearances of the Gog prophecy in the Bible. This concluding section of the vision of history in Dan 11:1–45 turns away from Antiochus Epiphanes (vv. 21–35) to prophesy the death of an end-time tyrant, who, unlike Antiochus, dies inside Judea. The Gog prophecies of Ezekiel 38–39 loom very close to the surface of the Daniel passage.

The reference to a period of wrath in Dan 11:36 echoes Ezek 38:18–19. The great evil from the north sweeping down into Israel in Dan 11:40–43 reverberates with Ezek 38:3–9. Dan 11:40 speaks of chariots and horses, just as in Ezek 38:4. In Dan 11:43, Libyans and Cushites join ranks with the northerner, paralleling Ezek 38:5. Finally, Dan 11:45 closely follows the picture in Ezek 39:11 of Gog's final end "east of the Sea," that is, the Mediterranean Sea. The MT of Dan 11:45 has the plural *yammîm,* reflecting

the idea of great, world-circling waters (cf. Gen 49:13, Ps 46:3, Deut 33:19, Jer 15:8). Just as in Ezekiel, the tyrant meets his defeat "between the sea and the beautiful holy mountain."

In postbiblical Judaism, Ezekiel 38–39 established itself early on as a basic eschatological paradigm and trajectory powerfully influencing subsequent reflection on the end of days. Already the Targums refer to God's coming messiah vanquishing Gog (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Exod 40:11). Indeed the Fragmentary Targum on Num 11:26 specifies that the subject of Eldad's and Medad's prophesying back during the exodus wanderings was nothing other than King Messiah defeating Gog's army (Levey 1987, 105–7 n. 1). Rashi, quoting b. Sanh. 17a, echoes that Eldad and Medad prophesied about Gog. He notes that Zechariah too (ch. 14) prophesied about Gog's attack on God's land.

Ezekiel 38–39 has also proved highly stimulating within the history of Christian interpretation. Many have seen the passage pointing to an apocalypse about to reveal itself in their own era. Ambrose (330–397 CE) identified Gog with the Goths (*Fid.* 2.16). The reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546) thought Gog's army was most likely the Turks. Fascinated by the Gog oracles, he took them as prophecies of the fate of Europe in the 1530s. Other Christian thinkers such as Augustine (354–430) (*Civ.* 20.11), however, have resisted applying the Gog chapters to contemporary events. Theodoret of Cyrus (ca. 393–458) dismissed such readings as foolish belief in myth (*Ezech.* 39.29), an attitude toward end-time prophecy that has taken hold within much of modernist Christianity.

A respectful reading of millennial literature will not, following Theodoret's lead, dismiss it as too mythical ever to be considered realistic. It is misguided to reduce texts such as Ezekiel 38–39 to mere hyperbole or "poetry," judging the millennial imagination too hard to accept on its own terms. At the same time, a respectful approach will avoid the other extreme of applying the text's otherworldly imagination immediately to contemporary events. It is crucial not to reduce the language to secret codes and ciphers for straightforward history, news reports, and politics. It is a serious "domestication" of these texts to "decode" their language into a specific one-dimensional, earth-bound scenario.

A glance at the Internet reveals the current pervasiveness of "domesticating" interpretation of the Gog text. As a sampling, here are five popular books viewing Ezekiel 38–39 as clairvoyant literature, peering past the millennia into today's news: (1) *Israel Under Fire: The Prophetic Chain of Events That Threatens the Middle East* (2009); (2) *The End Times in Chronological Order* (2012); (3) *Fifteen Days in September That Will Change the World* (2015); (4) *The Next Great War in the Middle East: Russia Prepares to Fulfill the Prophecy of Gog and Magog* (2016); and (5) *The Now Prophecies* (2016). The approach of these books fails on a number of fronts, including (1) an inability to account for the text's relevance to its first readers, (2) a failure to appreciate the key role of inner-biblical dialog and reuse of Scripture in Ezekiel 38–39, and (3) Ezekiel's significant repurposing of mythic archetypes as windows into transcendent reality. The interpretation of the passage elaborated below heartily engages these three fronts.

Not only is finding a respectful interpretation of Ezekiel 38–39 a challenge, but so is establishing the text's place in the history and origins of biblical apocalypticism. If genuine to the prophet, or at least to his earliest followers, the Gog of Magog passage

is among the earliest proto-apocalyptic prophecies in the Scriptures (see Bøe 2001, 88). It is of major significance for investigating the origins of the millennial imagination within Israel. The authenticity of chapters 38–39 to the school of Ezekiel, however, is contested (e.g., Cooke 1936, 407–8; Eichrodt 1970, 519). Indeed, it has been difficult to permanently squelch the idea that the Gog of Magog texts intrude into Ezekiel's book as late, extraneous material. For a forceful critique of this position, see the Introduction.

Deserving of more attention is a legitimate scholarly uncertainty about where in Ezekiel's book the Gog of Magog prophecies really belong. Should Ezekiel 38–39 appear in its present locale in the MT? Or should the passage appear among the book's salvation oracles, directly preceding Ezekiel 37, as found in Chester Beatty Papyrus 967 and likely also in our best Latin witness, Codex Wirceburgensis? (Rösel [2012, 405] sees the original sequence as 36:16–23bα; 38–39; 37; 40. He holds 36:23bβ–38 to be a later addition in the MT.) Alternatively, might chapters 38–39 fit best among the oracles against the nations (chs. 29–32)?

Undeniably, different versions of Ezekiel's book place the Gog unit in different suitable locations. The ordering reflected in Papyrus 967, Rösel contends, prioritizes the divine name's glorification in the eyes of the nations and the resulting worldwide recognition of God (also see Crane 2008, 140). The MT ordering also makes good sense, however, showcasing the Gog text as the finale of Israel's history. Indeed, there is a natural narrative flow to the MT ordering of texts. Preceding texts in the MT layout assume the perspective of exiles removed from their homeland, even when anticipating restoration (cf. 37:11–14). Starting with Ezekiel 38–39, however, the MT version takes up a perspective of those already returned to the Holy Land (see 38:11–12). Throughout the temple tour in Ezekiel 40–48, one continues to imagine oneself based back in Judah.

Ezekiel 40–48 depicts an ideally reconstructed homeland, retrofitted to rule out degradation. It is quite fitting to place a worldwide defeat of every impure and evil threat (38:22–23, 39:4–8) and a systematic purification of God's land (39:11–16) at one stage removed from such a utopian construct. A cosmic defeat of evil and a massive territorial purification naturally set the stage for the outlines of a permanently holy temple and land.

To understand the millennial worldview respectfully, *on its own terms,* readers and critics must imagine a preternatural Beyond. Millennial literature envisions the end-time inbreaking into history of this transcendent realm, which is truly separate from the empirical world. Seldom do most human beings consciously experience this alternate reality. It may show itself through rare psychological phenomena, such as the savant's ability to "tour" mathematical reality, "retrieving" calculations effortlessly rather than deriving them computationally. Alternatively, it may reveal itself through humanity's shared "mythologems," through the archetypes of the collective unconscious and their expression in myths, dreams, and visions (Boadt 1996, 217–18; Cook 2004b).

Ezekiel's book is full of the stuff of myths and visions. What is new in Ezekiel 38–39 is that his archetypes invade history as incarnate realities. Thus, the archetypal theme of a demiurge coveting the axis mundi appears in Ezek 38:12 but is known already from Ezek 28:1–10 and 11–19. Ezekiel 28 illuminates the character and drives of Tyre's ruler through the lens of myth. God declares to him: "You are haughty of heart,

you say, 'I am a god! I sit on a god's throne in the heart of the sea!'" In 28:11–19, the Tyrian ruler specifically instantiates a hubristic primordial cherub who falls from Eden. Repulsed at his hubris, God states, "I have struck you down . . . I have destroyed you, O shielding cherub" (Ezek 28:16 NJPS). In the Gog texts of Ezekiel 38–39, this demiurge actually arrives incarnate in history as Gog, a "mythic-realistic" eschatologized archetype!

In end-time prophecy, God's foes are a sinister horde swarming to attack Zion: "The vats overflow, for their wickedness is great" (Joel 3:13). Here, the mythic *Völkersturm* archetype (e.g., see Pss 2:1–6; 46; Isa 8:9–10; Mic 4:11–13) comes alive. This is certainly the case also in Ezek 38:9, 16 (cf. Zech 12:3, 9; 14:2). In "Gog's Mob," we are up against the "either-or" of evil and good, familiar from the binary world of myth. We grapple with *dualism,* the polar opposition in the contest of Baal and Mot, of Marduk and Tiamat, of Gandalf and Sauron, and of Harry Potter and Voldemort.

Gog and his allies—"vast and awesome" (NLT)—come on like a fierce storm, "advancing like a hurricane" (REB), covering earth in darkness (38:9, 16). They wreak havoc, "plundering, spoiling, and stripping bare" (38:12 REB). Seven Hebrew terms describe the weapons of Gog, which take seven years to burn after his defeat (39:9). The threat of Gog's armament is total; it is symbolically *cosmic.* After his forces are broken, for years "no one will have to go into the fields or woods to fetch kindling or cut down trees because they'll use their enemies' weapons for fuel" (39:9–10 VOICE).

In Gog, metaphoric and mythic imagery likening Pharaoh to a crocodile or crocodile god (Ezek 29:3–7) becomes eschatologized and literal (39:2–5; Tooman 2011, 242; Mackie 2015, 167–68). Gog appears as a sea serpent or dragon-monster, an incarnation of chaos itself—archetypically villainous (cf. Job 41:1–2, 7:12; Ps 74:13; Isa 27:1, 30:7, 51:9). An early editorial addition to Ezek 38:4 (see Mackie 2015, 167) reinforces Gog's reptilian horror. As in Ezek 29:3–4 (cf. 32:3), God places hooks in his jaws and pulls the monster in (38:4), just as in Herodotus's description of a crocodile hunt (*Hist.* 2.70).

Since this dragon is primeval chaos itself, the hunter of crocs in Ezekiel 38–39 must be none other than God in the guise of the *divine warrior* (see Ballentine 2015, 102; for a bibliography, see Bøe 2001, 86). Incarnating the *Chaoskampf* archetype, God battles to wrest creation out of fierce, slimy primal darkness. The self-slaughter of the enemy in Ezek 38:21 is characteristic of the divine warrior's victory (cf. Judg 7:22, 1 Sam 14:20, Hag 2:22). The battle over, all spoils are burned, completely dedicated to the divine warrior.

Gog and his hordes instantiate a preternatural spirit, a Power behind quotidian life. The probing lamp of the prophecy pierces the veil of banal experience, the façade of mundane wickedness, to reveal the prototypical spirits and archetypal dimensions that orient and infuse real-world enemies, such as Babylonia, that Israel had faced in its past.

Gog's inner drives signal the inhuman scale of his evil. The text goes out of its way to say he attacks a defenseless, civilian populace. His musings are repulsive: "I . . . will invade . . . unprotected villages and will assault the tranquil, unsuspecting people living safely there without walls, without gates, without bars" (38:11 VOICE).

Gog's pure greed is plain in the text. The passage repeats the Hebrew root for "looting" (*šālāl*) six times and the root for "plunder" (*bāzaz*) four times (38:12–13). The Edenlike highlands of Israel, with their marvelous fecundity (see 47:1–12), compel

Gog's avaricious notice (see Note *Will you not take notice?* on 38:14). Verse 12 particularly echoes Ezek 36:35, adopting its language of a desolate land become like Eden. Gog's ignoble fate matches the immensity of his evil. He ends up in a heap of bodies, "the mass grave of Gog and his mob of an army. They'll call the place Gog's Mob" (39:11 MESSAGE).

Gog's nature as pure chaos and evil comes even more clearly into focus when we consider the inner-biblical referencing embedded in Ezek 38:17, "Are you the one of whom I spoke in former days?" The primary reference, arguably, must be to Isa 14:4b–21. It must be to the utterly hubristic tyrant that Isaiah 14 taunts—the Shining One.

Like Gog (Ezek 38:6, 15; 39:2), this ruler is no tool of divine judgment but an "oppressor," a perpetrator of "unrelenting persecution" (Isa 14:4, 6; see Ezek 38:11–12). He unleashes chaos (cf. Ezek 38:20). Like the primordial "flood" (Isa 14:4 CEB), he lays the world waste (Isa 14:17). Also like Gog the northerner (Ezek 38:15, 39:2), who haunts the depths of Zaphon (*ṣāpôn;* see Note *Mountain crevasses* on 38:15), the Shining One is a northern demiurge, oriented on and coveting the "heights of Zaphon" (Isa 14:13).

Other, striking resemblances link Gog with the Shining One. Both incarnate "insolence" (Isa 14:4), aspiring to conquer the cosmos's center (Isa 14:13; Ezek 38:12, 43:7). When defeated, both lie exposed on the field, Gog as food for predators (Ezek 38:21; 39:4–5, 17–20), the tyrant of Isaiah 14 as "loathsome carrion" (Isa 14:19 NJPS). Just as Gog's dead mob stops up an entire valley (Ezek 39:11), the Shining One dies "covered with heaps of the slain" (Isa 14:19 NJB). As Hays (2011, 210) notes, his "mass grave" (Isa 14:19 NLT) recalls the Assyrians' disposal of the bodies of Lachish's defenders in a heap.

Gog and Isaiah's tyrant share more than an ignoble demise on the field of battle. Both fall on the field and then go down into Sheol's ghastliness (Isa 14:9–11, 15–20; Ezek 39:11). The magnitude of his evil pretensions land the Shining One at the "bottom of the bottommost pit" (v. 15 VOICE), "the deepest part of the world of the dead" (v. 15 GNT). No longer invoked by the living, the Shining One suffers a "second death" in Sheol (Hays 2011, 211). "Let him never be named, that offshoot of evil!" (Isa 14:20 NABR). So too, Gog ends up devoured by death. At least, that is one strong connotation of the verb *ʿābar* (pass on) in Ezek 39:11. The term describes passing children to Molech in the Hinnom Valley in Ezek 16:21, 20:26, and 23:36–42 (see further below).

Ezekiel's reuse of Isaiah 14 is a fine example of the intertextual origins of early biblical proto-apocalyptic prophecy. As Sweeney (2005, 240) writes, allusions "play a key role in every proto-apocalyptic text." Scribal visionaries approached earlier Scriptures as deep knotty puzzles to be untangled. The Ezekiel writers were fascinated by such puzzles and determined to unravel the nature of "the day of which I [God] have spoken" (Ezek 39:8). Forging a compelling new imagination constructed from allusions to preceding, authoritative texts, they illumined the mysteries of God as they penned Ezekiel 38–39.

The taunt of Isaiah 14 in its original setting dates to 705–689 BCE, nicely fitting the reference in Ezek 38:17 to a prophecy from "former days" (for discussion and bibliography, see Sweeney 1996, 232–33, 237; Hays 2011, 216–18). Originally, the core text in Isa 14:4b–21 castigated an *Assyrian* monarch. Specifically, it uses language about

Assyrian royalty in Isa 10:13–15. The ignoble death of the tyrant of Isaiah 14 matches that of no known Babylonian ruler. Instead, it fits the death on the battlefield and lack of proper burial of Sargon II of Assyria (721–705 BCE). Isaiah's taunt song was only later oriented against Babylon, taking its present form after the exile (see the additions in Isa 14:3–4a, 22–23).

Just as Isaiah's editors reworked chapter 14 as a prophecy of Babylon's fall (see Isa 14:3–4a, 22–23), so Ezekiel's school redeployed the text to depict the end-time reversal of Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem. Sweeney (1996, 233, cf. 236) notes how such editing "testifies to the fact that Isaiah's prophecies were studied by later tradents so that conclusions could be drawn." In Ezekiel 38–39, such conclusions reveal the end times.

In a very real sense, in Ezekiel 38–39 Sargon's hubristic spirit returns from death to terrorize the living. Gog makes his end-time appearance at least partially in the guise of the ghoul of Sheol in Isaiah 14. Note how Meshech and Tubal, which Gog leads (38:2–3, 39:1), have been declared imprisoned in Sheol's depths by Ezek 32:26 (see Nobile 1986). Now Gog brings them back to storm God's people. No matter that he is a gross, desecrated corpse (Isa 14:19); they pay no mind to his bed of maggots and worm blanket (Isa 14:11).

Hays (2011, 206 n. 11) raises the possibility that Isa 14:19a originally spoke of Sargon as a vulture, an unclean bird and denizen of Sheol. If true, Sargon's incursion during the last days is truly zombielike. Haunting the living in the form of such birds was a familiar tactic of the dead. Thus, the Sumero-Akkadian "Evil Demons" texts describe one ghoul who "always flies around at night like a bird in the dark" (see Hays 2011, 46).

The editors of Isaiah 14 have followed up the taunt against the Shining One with another text from the eighth century BCE, Isa 14:24–27. This passage specifically prophesies Assyria's defeat (although the editors have used it to furnish an analogy for Babylonia's appointed fate). The language of removing Assyria's yoke and burden in 14:25 echoes the same statement of release from Assyrian oppression in 10:27. Marvin Sweeney (1996, 233) persuasively dates the text to Sargon II's march through Judah in 720 BCE.

This second passage is a highly significant background of Ezekiel 38–39, for it recounts divine plans to break a ferocious northern enemy. Anja Klein (2008, 134–35, 137–38) notes that in both Isaiah and Ezekiel God promises to destroy the northern enemy within the promised land's borders, that is, in "my land" (Isa 14:25, Ezek 38:16), and specifically upon "my mountains" (Isa 14:25; Ezek 39:4, 17), which are understood as the *Gottesberg,* the cosmic mountain. Both Isa 14:24–27 and Ezekiel 38–39 also share an emphasis on the driving sovereignty of God in history, which even borders on determinism (Isa 14:24, 27; Ezek 38:4, 39:2).

Though originally aimed against Assyria, Isa 14:24–27 is not strongly anchored in the Assyrian era. It speaks of a divine plan "concerning the whole earth" and "all the nations" (v. 26). Isaiah's editors took it as an overture to the oracles against the nations that follow for nine chapters. So too, Ezekiel's authors took this text as global in scope. They saw an inclusive vision here awaiting fulfillment in their own day.

Ezekiel's Gog prophecy represents early biblical millennial literature and also the literature of those with a focused priestly mindset. This is expected, since, as Joyce (2007a, 214) nicely puts it, "In Ezekiel, priestly and visionary features are found

alongside each other, and indeed often interleaved." Ezekiel and his followers were Zadokites, aligned with the priestly HS Scriptures within the Pentateuch. The HS literature, in texts such as Leviticus 17–26, prioritizes a sacral wholeness of God's people and land centered squarely in God's indwelling presence at the temple.

In Ezek 38:16, God identifies personally with the land of Israel, which God calls "my land" (cf. Ezek 36:5; Joel 2:18, 3:2 [MT 4:2]; Zech 1:14, 8:2). The emphasis comes straight from HS texts (e.g., Lev 20:22; 25:2, 23), where Israel's entire land, not just Mount Zion, is considered the archetypal cosmic mountain, God's highland. Ezekiel appears to have coined the moniker "mountains of Israel" to refer to this land (Ezek 38:8; see NOTE *Center of the earth* on 38:12). The ideal in HS is for Israel to grow in holiness by sharing the highland with God and keeping its rules (Lev 20:7–8). The people thus "live securely on the land" (Lev 25:18, 19). The Gog texts take up this HS motif of Israel "living securely" (Ezek 38:8, 11, 14; 39:26), as do earlier Ezekiel texts in 28:26 and 34:25, 28.

One of the clearest Zadokite themes in Ezek 38:1–17 is God's central concern with *holiness* (cf. Ezek 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23). According to v. 16, to set things right on earth, God needs to reveal publicly—even internationally—the divine holiness. In this, it is highly significant that the highland invaded by Gog is no ordinary territory but the abode of God's bodily Presence. (On the sanctifying Presence, see especially Exod 29:43 and 31:13 [both HS].) Here, in this sanctified land, can be staged the ultimate confrontation between life and holiness on one hand and defilement and chaos—Gog (Murk/*Düsternis,* see the INTRODUCTION)—on the other. Here, in the highland abode of the Lord, God's incarnate indwelling ensures a tangible holiness and contacts and affects everything. This indwelled land is the uniquely fitting arena for the incontestable, decisive victory of the God of life and sanctification.

Among the most shocking motifs in the Gog vision is God's apparent manipulation of free will. Although on one level Gog's attack upon Israel is his own sinister scheme (38:10), God's sovereign manipulation of Gog is clear from the start (38:4, 16). In God's own time, God stages the ultimate end-time battle pitting chaos against holiness. God is determined to "prove myself holy through you, Gog" (v. 16).

The Ezekiel group did not invent this motif, but adapted it from HS. Thus, in the midst of the exodus plagues, HS inserts this declaration of the Lord to Moses: "Go to Pharaoh; for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his officials, in order that I may show these signs of mine among them, and that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I have made fools of the Egyptians and what signs I have done among them—so that you may know that I am the LORD" (Exod 10:1–2). Repeatedly HS stresses that the plagues have the purpose that Egypt should *know* who God is.

Ezekiel 38–39 shares with HS the same driving imperative of establishing *knowledge* of God on earth, knowledge that "I am the LORD" (Exod 10:2; Ezek 38:16, 23; 39:6, 7, 22, 28). In Ezekiel's book, as in HS, God purposes to establish knowledge of God's self both within Israel, before God's unbelieving people (Exod 6:7, 10:2, 16:12, 29:46, 31:13), and also within the nations of earth (Exod 7:5, 14:18; Ezek 28:22, 36:23). To fully know God is to experience both God's holy character (Lev 11:44–45 HS) and God's tangible presence (Exod 29:43, 31:13, both HS). Ezekiel does not claim that the experience brings salvation to earth's nations (but see NOTE *Living complacently*

on 39:6; Rösel 2012, 88–89, 252, 412), but it does unite God and Israel in profound interconnectivity.

Ezekiel's "prime directive" by no means entails mere cognitive knowledge, as texts such as Exod 16:12 (HS) demonstrate. There, the wilderness generation was already well aware that the Lord was their God. Yet, the Lord still needed them to "know" it, to "experience" it (cf. German: *erfahren*). The people had need to experience it in the greater sense in which God's numinous holiness became tangibly real to them (see Evans 2006, 301, 324). Indeed, the goal is for God's people to "know"—experience viscerally—an *intimate* holiness that interconnects and transforms them. According to Exod 29:46 (HS), to know God is to know that God fervently desires to dwell interactively within Israel.

The recognition formula does not appear in Ezekiel 40–48 partly because, as Evans (2006, 288) notes, there, in utopian reality, "the prophecy latent in the formula is fulfilled." With the covenant restored, Israel lives in constant contact and interactivity with its holy God dwelling in its midst. Thus, as Evans (208) shows, Ezekiel's book in 20:12 directly quotes the expansive, epexegetical version of the recognition formula found in Exod 31:13 (also see Ezek 37:28). It is not enough that the people of Israel know that "I am the Lord"; they must know that "I am the Lord who sanctifies you" (Exod 31:13 HS).

The utopian vision of Ezekiel 40–48 will make this "knowledge" of God concrete as HS understands it—this sanctifying, transformative interactivity of God and human beings. It will do so in the form of a tiered matrix of holiness centered in a God-indwelled temple. Each stepped level of the matrix is designed to interlink all members of the community with God's life-changing, ennobling, holy presence. God wills that the people interrelate with God's fiery holiness in radically transformative interconnection.

Expansion of the Gog Oracles (38:18–23, 39:11–16)

38 [18]And it will happen on that day, when Gog invades the soil of Israel—utterance of the Sovereign Lord—that my wrath will boil up in my fury. [19]In my indignation and blazing rage I have decreed it: I swear that on that day a great quaking shall befall the soil of Israel. [20]The fish of the sea, the birds of the air, the animals of the field, all the creeping things that scurry on the soil, and every human on earth will quake at my presence. And the mountains will disintegrate, the steep pathways will collapse, and every wall will tumble to the ground. [21]Against Gog on all my mountains I will summon the sword—utterance of the Sovereign Lord—each one's sword will be against his own comrade. [22]I will judge him with plague and bloodshed. A torrential downpour and hailstones, fire, and sulfur I will rain upon him, and his troops, and the many peoples with him. [23]Thus I will display how great I am, prove how holy I am, and bring the many nations to know me. Then they will know that I am the Lord.

39 [11]And it will happen on that day, I will set aside a place right there in Israel as a burial ground for Gog, the Valley of the Passers-On east of the Sea. It will stop up the route of those who must pass on. They will bury Gog and his whole mob of an army there; they will call it the Valley of Gog's Mob (*Ge' Hamon Gog*). [12]It will take seven months for the House of Israel to bury the bodies, in order to purify the land. [13]All the people of Israel will help bury them, and it will be to their renown on the day when I show my glory—utterance of the Sovereign Lord. [14]Then they will detail teams continually employed in crossing through the land burying those passing on, interring any human remains still above ground, so as to purify it. They will begin their search at the end of the seven months of mass burial. [15]As those who traverse the land make their rounds, anyone who sees a human bone must erect a marker by it, so the gravediggers can take it to the Valley of Gog's Mob for interment. [16](A town nearby is called Crowd Town, or Hamonah.) So they will purify the land.

Notes

38:18. *Boil up in my fury.* The literal Hebrew conveys an image of raging anger flaring up visibly in God's face. The anthropopathism is characteristic of Zadokite writings (e.g., Joel 2:18, Zech 8:2), including HS texts (e.g., Exod 31:17, Lev 3:16, Num 25:11). Thus, God is defensively, intensively "patriotic" about the Judean homeland, which the Lord refers to with "hot jealousy" as "my land" (Ezek 36:5).

38:20. *Quake at my presence.* The Hebrew verb *rāʿaš* usually denotes a physical quaking, often an earthquake set off by God's theophany. With time, the verb evolved into a technical term for the eruption of chaos at the eschaton. After the exile, as here, the earthquake motif fused with the enemy-from-the-north tradition to form a standard part of the end-time scenario (see Childs 1959, 189, 197–98; Cook 1995a, 93–94). The verb *rāʿaš* can also signal trembling in fearfulness (Ezek 12:18), however, and this allows for some poetic artistry in Ezek 38:20. The text can be read to say that the presence of God not only shakes the cosmos but also makes even little ants and beetles quake in awe.

38:23. *Display . . . prove.* On the *hithpael* stem denoting the presentation of oneself as being in a specific state, see *IBHS* 431, #11. A plus in the Old Greek adds "and get glory for myself," an expansion likely influenced by language in the oracle against Sidon in Ezek 28:22 (Mackie 2015, 163). The assimilation came naturally, filling out a pair of texts that already drew on the Sidon oracle (e.g., 38:22 ↔ 28:23; 39:13 ↔ 28:22a).

Bring . . . nations to know me. As in 38:16, the expansion of the Gog prophecy finds it imperative to establish a visceral *knowledge* of God's presence on earth, knowledge that "I am the Lord" (Exod 10:2, 14:18, both HS; Ezek 38:16, 23; 39:6, 7, 22, 28).

Know that I am the Lord. Ezekiel's characteristic recognition formula (*Erkenntnisaussage*) occurs five times in Ezekiel 38–39 (38:23; 39:6, 7, 22, 28; cf. 38:16, 39:23). In preceding chapters, it has occurred often, fifty-eight times, starting in 5:13. As Zadokite phraseology, the formula frequently follows, "almost as a divine signature," a law or series of laws in Leviticus 18–26 (Evans 2006, 153). The formula is characteristic of HS style (see Exod 6:7, 7:5, 10:2, 16:12, 29:46, and 31:13). As already explained, for the Zadokites "knowing" God is not merely cognitive. As shown by texts such as Exod 6:7 and 29:45–46 (both HS), it entails a transformative experience of interrelationship with a deity who tangibly indwells Israel. According to Evans (2006, 177), the former text strongly influenced Ezekiel. The divine indwelling transforms Israel by sanctifying it (see Ezek 37:28).

39:11. *A place right there.* The construct phrase *měqôm šām* seems to mean "*a place right there* in Israel." In contrast, the LXX *Vorlage,* followed by the Vulgate, must have read **měqôm šēm* (cf. NJB: "a famous spot in Israel"), either misconstruing the unusual Hebrew syntax or offering a wordplay stressing Gog's impact (Crane 2008, 178).

Valley of the Passers-On [Hebrew: *ʿōbĕrîm*]. The name appears to be a verbal play on the Valley of Abarim (Deut 32:49, Jer 22:20), that is, of the "regions beyond." Since this valley is specifically "in Israel," however, no direct connection with the valley of Deuteronomy 32 is in mind. Instead, the name was likely chosen for its possible meaning "Valley of the Departed Dead" (cf. Israel's camp at Oboth/"Ghosts," Num 21:10–11; Pope 1981, 171). Although the verb *ʿābar* can denote travel (cf. NRSV, NJPS,

NLT: "Valley of the Travelers"; CEB: "Traveler's Valley"), it may equally signal movement through a liminal boundary into regions beyond, even passing on to the grave (see Job 33:28, 33:18; consult Block 1998, 469; Joyce 2007a, 216). In this regard, it is especially significant that Ezek 16:21, 20:26, and 23:36–42 use the verb *ʿābar* to describe child sacrifice at the Topheth of the Valley of Hinnom, a locale alluded to later in v. 11 (see Note *Ge' Hamon Gog* on 39:11; Odell 1994, 485). If the text of v. 14 in the MT is correct (see Note *Those passing on* on 39:14), then Gog's horde *itself* consists of the "passers-on," those traversing the journey of death. Fascinatingly, an Ugaritic text (*KTU* 1.22 1.12–17) links *ʿbrm* with *mlkm,* that is, with the living-dead departed (*rephaim*).

East of the Sea. As noted in the Comments on the preceding section of Ezekiel, the "Sea" means the Mediterranean. The Dead Sea is excluded as a possible referent, for a locale east of it would no longer be, as v. 11 has already stipulated, "in Israel." Certainly, the authors of Dan 11:45 interpreted the sea here as the Mediterranean. They used the plural *yammîm* to indicate the great, chaotic sea (as in Ps 46:4).

Stop up. Gog's Mob are so many that they plug up the valley, the Valley of the Passers-On. Marvin Pope (1977, 174) argues that the Hinnom Valley (see below for this identification) is here understood as the "terminal depot" for those passing on to the underworld. The passage to the Beyond is now clogged with the crush of the living dead.

His whole mob. The Hebrew text creates a playful etymology. The valley for burying the horde/"mob" (*hāmôn*) of Gog is to be called *hămôn gôg.* On the rarer form of the third masculine singular possessive suffix here (*-ōh* instead of *-ô*), see *IBHS* 302, sec. 16.4.1. *BHS* indicates that *hămônô* is a *qere* here, but this is not in the Leningrad Codex.

Ge' Hamon Gog. The name *hămôn gôg* appears to be a wordplay on the Valley of Hinnom, southwest of Jerusalem. The place was infamous for the sacrifice of children (see Note *Valley of the Passers-On* on 39:11, 2 Kgs 23:10, Jer 7:30–34).

39:12. *House of Israel.* The phrase is characteristic of HS style (e.g., Exod 16:31, 40:38; Lev 10:6; 17:3, 8, 10; 22:18; Num 20:29; see Knohl 1995, 110).

39:13. *The day.* The day in mind is the eschatological "day of the Lord," "the day of which I [God] have spoken" (39:8).

Show my glory. The *niphal* stem here functions in a causative-reflexive manner (see *IBHS* 390–91, sec. 23.4 h), conveying both the sense "manifest my glory" (*HALOT* Niph. 4; see NJB, NIV, NLT, NJPS; also see the use of the *hithpael* stem above, Note *Display . . . prove* on 38:23) and the sense "get myself glory" (see CEB, NET, NASB). Note the precise echo of *hikkābĕdî* in Exod 14:18 (HS) here (consult Rösel 2012, 341).

39:14. *Teams continually employed.* On the syntax of the initial phrase (literally: "men of unceasing"), compare Ezek 30:16; see *GKC* 418, sec. 128w. The force of the construct chain is to designate continual engagement at a purpose, here the purpose of purification.

Those passing on. This second reference to *ʿōbĕrîm* (NRSV, NJPS: "invaders") here is an MT plus over against the Old Greek. It is likely a scribal clarification that the verse's earlier reference to *ʿōbĕrîm* (scouts, cf. NET; also v. 15a) is related neither to Gog's horde itself as composed of *ʿōbĕrîm* (passers on, here, v. 14) nor to the use of *ʿōbĕrîm* for those living-dead, including some of Gog's horde, blocked by Gog's mass of corpses (v. 11). For discussion, see Tooman 2011, 172–75; Mackie 2015, 83–84.

At the end. The Hebrew preposition and construct phrase means "after the passing of" or "at the end of" (as in Ezek 3:15–16; so NJB, CEB, NIV, NLT). Contrast NRSV, NJPS, NABR, and NET, which all have the search for unburied remains going on for seven months (concurrent with the period of mass burial in v. 12?).

39:16. *Hamonah.* The Hebrew term *hămôn* (mob) is presented in feminine form (*hămônâ*), turned into the proper name of a city. The reader immediately thinks either of a city founded with a name commemorating the defeat of Gog or, if Pope (1977, 174) is correct, a city on the *other side,* an "infernal underworld metropolis" known as "Crowd Town." Pope has noted the necessarily overcrowded state of the underworld, a land jam-packed with a "silent majority" from all of history (see now Hays 2011, 326). Peering deeper, however, there is more to v. 16. Odell (1994) has shown that Crowd Town is none other than Jerusalem! As Jerusalem, I believe that Hamonah should be seen as "Turbulent Town," "Crowd Town," in two dialectical senses. In the future, a Jerusalem packed with crowds will signal blessing and abundance of life (see Zech 2:4 [MT 2:8]; cf. Ezek 36:37–38). In the past, however, Jerusalem, like Gog's mob, was turbulent in its riotous rebellion (Ezek 5:7, 7:12–14, 23:40–42). If Odell (1994, 484) is correct, in fact, the symbolic name Hamonah cleverly derives from the thrice-recurring condemnatory locution *hămônāh* in Ezek 7:12, 13, and 14. The name is neither a supplement to nor a corruption of the text (480). Ezekiel 40–48 will cast the new central city of Ezekiel's utopian land in just this dual perspective. Its twelve gates welcome pilgrim masses from every tribe (48:30–35). Simultaneously, because of past turbulence, the city is separated from the temple (see Note *[Central] city* on 45:6).

Comments

Ezekiel 38:18–23 and 39:11–16, presented together in this commentary, represent expansions of the Gog oracles that both radicalize their eschatological urgency and their priestly, Zadokite fervor. Several features mark this material as supplemental, stemming from a somewhat later time than the original core. Both of these expansions of the Gog section begin with the formulaic phrase "And it will happen on that day" (38:18, 39:11), a formula not occurring elsewhere in Ezekiel but often used in prophetic texts to attach supplemental eschatological material (e.g., Isa 3:18; 19:16, 19; 23:15; Joel 3:18; Zech 14:6; see De Vries 2016, 17, 297–309). Both texts shift to speak of Gog in the third person, rather than directly in the second person. Ezekiel 39:11–16, especially, seems to interrupt a sense of logical progression in the flow of the Gog prophecies.

Verses 17–20 of chapter 39 follow most naturally on vv. 1–10 of the chapter. Absent the radicalizing expansion in 39:11–16, the bodies of Gog's horde still remain strewn upon the open field as vv. 17–20 begin, an open invitation to the wild predators in this section that gather to devour them. With the insertion of 39:11–16 the reader is left puzzled about how the chapter's various scenes actually fit together. As Steven Tuell (2009, 270) puts it, "The interposition of verses 11–16, which describe the burial of the slain at Hamon Gog, leaves these verses strangely at odds with their context."

Several signals suggest that 38:18–23 and 39:11–16 cohere, so there are good reasons for treating the two texts as an interconnected pair. As noted, both begin with the same "on that day" formula. Both speak of Gog in the third person. Both passages magnify Gog's horde into otherworldly proportions and, in general, display a notable

radicalization of eschatological fervor. References to the late oracle against Sidon in 28:20–23 appear in both sections (38:22 ↔ 28:23; 39:13 ↔ 28:22a; Tooman 2011, 104–11).

Both passages, 38:18–23 and 39:11–16, understand God's ultimate aim at the day of the Lord to be manifesting the divine glory, proving how holy God is (38:23, 39:13). Using Hebrew reflexive stems, each speaks of God's self-presentation as the numinous, holy one. God proves God's divine holiness (38:23), which entails God unveiling the divine glory, the *kābôd,* on earth (39:13). This all rings with the language and diction of HS (e.g., Exod 10:2, 14:18; Lev 11:44). Thus, Rabbi Joseph Kara (ca. 1065–1135 CE) saw the strong echo of Exod 14:18 (HS) here, in which the defeat of a mob of evil at the Red Sea unveils the divine glory.

Many commonplace apocalyptic tropes stand out prominently in Ezek 38:18–23. Anja Klein (2008, 124) describes these verses as expanding chapter 38 into a universal, apocalyptic judgment on the world, foregrounding God's incontestable power on earth. It is perhaps on the basis of this particular section of the Gog material that so much of modern popular culture takes it for granted that Ezekiel 38–39 is end-time prophecy. Verses 19–20 speak of a "great quaking," loaded language signaling an outbreak of primordial chaos. Massive earthquakes, which collapse walls, highways, and mountains (38:20), are both apocalyptic harbingers, presaging the end times, and markers of dualism, separating the eons (see Note *Quake at my presence* on 38:20). The sweeping language of v. 20 from Genesis 1 (Joyce 2007a, 215) drives home a theme of creation's recapitulation and rebirth.

Starting with v. 21, begins the primordial battle, the "combat" or "conflict" myth, now waged *physically, massively* on earth. Here is the hoary *Chaoskampf* incarnate, the archetypal struggle between order/holiness/life and chaos/defilement/death. The archetypal roots are ancient. Take, for example, an Akkadian cylinder seal (Ur, 2350–2150 BCE; fig. 1). Chaos appears in the seal as the subdued animal below the foot of the large figure of Shamash. Like Gog, the monster lies defeated at the mountains (behind him). This same chaos is also imprisoned under earth. Kneeling servants at the seal's edges grasp subterranean gateposts that hold chaos-water back.

Israelite tradition knew well the victory of the divine warrior over chaos in the *Urzeit,* the primordial beginning. In the Song of the Sea (see Exod 15:3–12), in the stories of YHWH-wars in Joshua and Judges (e.g., Josh 10:10–14, Judg 5:4–5), and in psalms (e.g., Ps 50:2–3, Hab 3:3–11), the divine warrior defeats his enemies and establishes his kingship. These texts do not recount creation but draw on the conflict myth to deepen memories of salvation history and flesh out present summonses of divine intervention. With the emergence of millennial thinking, however, the scene of divine victory shifts back to the cosmic stage. As Debra Ballentine (2015, 194) puts it, the eschatological overhaul of the world ties back to "stories that narrate the establishment of divine and world order (Anzu, Enuma Elish, and the Baʾlu Cycle)." The warrior engages the *Völkersturm*—chaos itself (e.g., Zech 14:3, 5). Cosmogenesis is recapitulated; *Endzeit* becomes *Urzeit*.

In Ezek 38:21–22, all-out war erupts between Heaven and Gog. Israel plays no part, except in the mop-up. As in the olden tales of divine warfare (Judg 7:22, 1 Sam 14:20, 2 Chr 20:23), mutual self-slaughter within enemy ranks inflicts heavy damage (cf. Isa 49:26, Zech 14:13; see Cook 1995a, 89): "Gog killing Gog on all the mountains

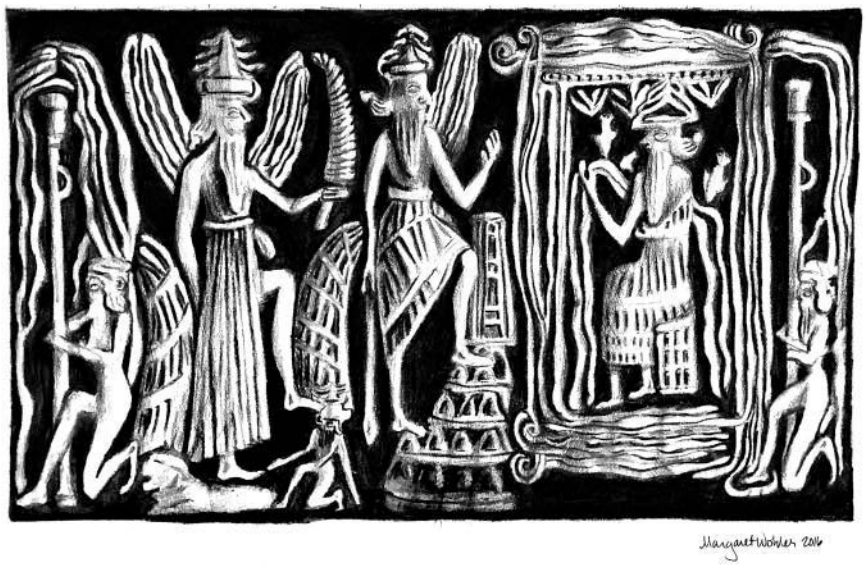


Figure 1. Cylinder seal with Ea in the Apsu (fresh water); Ur, Akkadian Period, 2350–2150 BCE. Drawing by Margaret Wohler.

of Israel" (v. 21 MESSAGE). Then, Heaven deluges Gog with pestilence and plague, torrential downpour, and hailstones, fire, and sulfur (v. 22). One recalls Sodom's fate (Gen 19:24): a downpour of burning asphalt, a river of lava from God out of heaven.

We have just seen that a millennial worldview emerges as icons and archetypal symbols morph into transcendence incarnate. This happens stunningly in Ezek 39:11–16, particularly with the Tophet—the precinct of child sacrifice and cremation—in the Valley of Hinnom (2 Kgs 23:10, Jer 7:31). (Archaeologists have identified several "Tophets," chiefly a significant one in Carthage, North Africa.) The Hinnom Tophet, known to Ezekiel's authors, was a ritual gate to the netherworld through which parents passed (*ʿābar* in the *hiphil*) their children (Lev 18:21 HS, 2 Kgs 23:10, Jer 32:35). Now, it morphs into a portal to the realm of death for God's archetypal-yet-real foe, Gog.

The mutated locale becomes the "Valley of the Departed Dead/Obarim" (Ezek 39:11; Pope 1981, 171). The verb *ʿābar* behind the name "Obarim" signals passing from earthbound existence to the Beyond (see the texts just cited as well as Job 33:28, 33:18; Block 1998, 469). The "passing" is sometimes to "Molek" (Lev 18:21, Jer 32:35) or to idols (Ezek 16:20–21) but can also be to YHWH (as in the law of the firstborn in Exod 13:12 and Ezek 20:26). Note how Ezek 16:21, 20:26, and 23:36–42 all use the verb *ʿābar* of human sacrifice in the Hinnom Valley (see Note *Valley of the Passers-On* on 39:11).

Gog's soldiers are a "mob" (*hāmôn;* 39:11); their burial valley is renamed *hămôn gôg.* This term, *hāmôn,* reeks of numinous chaos unleashed on the vulnerable. In the Babylonian Atrahasis epic, the agitation and turmoil signaled by *hāmôn* were precisely what doomed Mesopotamia to utter destruction (Bodi 2009, 487). So too the Lord will

defeat all stormy chaos. As Ps 65:7 (MT 65:8) puts it, God muzzles both sea storm and wave crash; God stills the roaring tumult (*hāmôn*) of the peoples (also see Isa 17:12–13).

"Passers-on"—those traversing cosmic, ontological boundaries—make up Gog's army (Ezek 39:14). The force is ghoulish—Gog's troops are denizens of the pit (Ezek 32:26). *Hāmôn* in Ezekiel usually refers to masses of people within Sheol's grip. In Ezekiel 32, as Lilly (2012, 172) notes, *hāmôn* refers to enemy masses descending in death's mire. Fascinatingly, Ezekiel's editors have used the term *hāmôn* at various points in the book to extend militaristic images "onto an apocalyptic temporal or spatial plane" (171).

The instructions in Ezek 39:12–16 about burying Gog entirely assume an end-time scenario. The totality and dualism of God's victory are immediately apparent in that no enemy troops at all remain to bury their comrades. The task falls to Israel, and it is gargantuan: Gog's burial fills an entire valley (v. 11); the total populace of Israel must involve itself in the burial effort for seven months (vv. 12, 14). Even the seven-month effort of mass interment does not finish the job. After that time, permanently appointed, professional teams must work full time scouring Israel for enemy remains (vv. 14–15). The all-out search drags on until most body parts decompose, leaving only bones.

The God of these radical expansions of the Gog prophecies remains the God of Zadokite priests, the God of the Holiness School. In fact, as the eschatology intensifies in these sections, so do the central priestly, Zadokite concerns. The strikingly anthropopathic depiction of raging divine emotions in Ezek 38:18–19 makes the Zadokite focus certain from the start. God fights Gog in boiling fury. (For discussion of the Zadokites' anthropomorphic deity, see the Introduction; Kasher 1998; and Knohl 1995, 170–72.)

The expansions to the Gog prophecy make God's self-revelation of divine glory and holiness the objects of God's efforts on the eschatological day (38:23, 39:13). These divine goals are native to the thought of HS texts. Thus, Lev 10:1–7 (HS) describes how the release of holy fire on earth naturally manifests holiness *and* glory (Lev 10:3). The Zadokites are convinced that contact with God's overwhelming presence means nothing other than creaturely collapse before fiery divine *otherness*.

The priestly theme of God's fiery numinousness is clear in the pyrotechnics of Ezek 38:22, but the topic shifts in 39:11–16 to priestly abhorrence of death and corpses. It is no coincidence that allusions to Tophets and child sacrifice resound in Ezekiel 39 (e.g., see the Notes *Valley of the Passers-On* and *Ge' Hamon Gog* on 39:11). The HS texts are specific in their loathing of such rites of Molech (see Lev 18:21, 20:2–6). The God of life has nothing to do with human sacrifice and the infernal pit. Ezekiel 20:25 likely alludes to Israelites justifying child sacrifice with firstborn laws, such as Exod 13:2 and 22:29b, but Ezek 20:26 views such justification with horror (see Heider 1985, 320–21).

Relatedly, Ezek 39:11–16 is virtually obsessed with getting Gog's decomposing, defiling corpses buried. The focus stems directly from the HS concern with the defiling effect of dead bodies (see Lev 21:1; 22:4, 7; Num 9:6, all HS; cf. Ezek 44:25–26). Contact with a corpse not only makes one ritually unclean but also transmits a contagious impurity antithetical to the sacredness of God's land, where God's Presence dwells. Those infected with this contagion "defile the tabernacle of the Lord" (Num 19:13 HS).

As Rashbam comments (on Num 19:22), a corpse represents the highest level of uncleanness, able to transmit its impurity at several degrees of separation. God thus demands that Israel put outside the community "everyone who is unclean through

contact with a corpse." "They must not defile their camp, where I dwell among them" (Num 5:1–4 HS; also to be expelled are those with discharges and scaly infections). According to Num 19:13 (HS), those who remain in an unclean state must be "cut off." To be "cut off" probably means to die suddenly as a divine punishment (Greenberg 1983, 250, on Ezek 14:8; Block 1997, 431) but likely also entails the extirpation of one's lineage and the loss of family lands (see Milgrom 1991, 457–60).

The use of the verb "cleanse" (*ṭāhēr*) in Ezek 39:12, 14, and 16 directly reflects the requirement in HS of ceremonial "cleansing" for anyone exposed to a human corpse and thus defiled. According to Num 19:11–12 (HS), "Those who touch the dead body of any human being shall be unclean seven days. They shall purify themselves with the water on the third day and on the seventh day, and so be clean [*ṭāhēr*]." As Rashi notes, contact with human remains requires use of special purification water (Num 19:13).

Rashi's exposition cleverly brings out the emphasis on life in Num 19:13 (HS), which speaks of a *nephesh,* an animate being, having died. Noting that the Hebrew word *nephesh* often means "life," Rashi sees the text solemnly honoring even the minimum amount of human remains that can logically equate with life force. Even as little of a dead body as one-third of a cup of blood represents what might preserve life. The death of even this small bit of life, therefore, stands fully opposed to the character and will of Israel's God of life. Ezekiel's God holds every *nephesh* precious (Ezek 18:4; see Num 16:22 HS). (On God's love of life, see further Ezek 18:23, 32 and 33:11.)

The Fall of Gog (39:1–10)

39 [1]Now you, Human One, prophesy against Gog and say: Message from the Sovereign Lord: Look, I challenge you, Gog, coalition leader of Meshech and Tubal! [2]I will turn you about, guide you along, and bring you up out of the mountain crevasses of the north. I will bring you against the mountains of Israel. [3]Then I will knock your bow out of your left hand, and make your arrows drop from your right hand. [4]You will fall dead in battle on the mountains of Israel, you and all your troops and peoples with you. I will serve you as food to every kind of predatory bird and animal of the field. [5]You will fall dead out in the wild, for I, I have spoken. Utterance of the Sovereign Lord. [6]Then, I will send fire against the land of Magog and against those living complacently on far-off coasts, and they shall know that I am the Lord. [7]My holy name I will make known amid my people Israel. I will not let my holy name be profaned again. Then the nations shall know that I am the Lord, the Holy One in Israel.

[8]Look, it is coming, it will happen—utterance of the Sovereign Lord. That is the day of which I have spoken.

[9]Then the inhabitants of Israel's cities will go out and use the weapons for fuel; they will light them on fire—buckler and shield, bow and arrows, javelin and lance. They will use them for fuel for seven years. [10]They will not need to bring in wood from the countryside or chop down trees in the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. They will loot those who looted them and plunder those who plundered them—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

Notes

39:1. *Look, I challenge you.* The phrasing is nearly verbatim that found in 38:2–3. See the Notes above on those verses.

39:2. *Guide you along.* The Hebrew verb is a *hapax legomenon,* though with an apparent cognate in Ethiopic. It seems to mean to lead or urge along. *HALOT* suggests

"lead along on a rope." It is used in the *pilpel* formation, perhaps reinforcing God's persistent, mysterious command of Gog.

Mountain crevasses of the north. The same phrase, *miyyarkĕtê ṣāpôn,* occurs earlier in the Gog prophecies; see Note *Mountain crevasses* on 38:15.

I will bring you against. The same phrasing also occurs in 38:16.

Mountains of Israel. See Notes *To the mountains* on 38:8 and *Center of the earth* on 38:12. The phrase "mountains of Israel" occurs sixteen times in Ezekiel's book as a whole and four times in the Gog prophecies, but nowhere else in the Hebrew Bible. It connotes the idea of the Holy Land as God's cosmic highland paradise.

39:4. *You . . . your troops . . . peoples with you.* Ezekiel 38:9 has a very similar phrasing (cf. 38:6, 22).

To . . . bird and animal. The Hebrew preposition "to" does double duty here, being omitted before the phrase "animal of the field" (see *GKC* 384, sec. 119.5hh). The scene of this verse is picked up and elaborated below in vv. 17–20, which depict a lavish, ritual feasting on Gog's troops enjoyed by the animal kingdom.

39:5. *Out in the wild.* The expression does not designate an open plain (LXX, Radak) in contrast to the "mountains" of v. 4. In Ezekiel, "mountains of Israel" means the entire land. Rather, the idea is that Gog will fall "in the wilds" (NJB), far from civility and compassion (see the use of *pĕnê haśśādeh* in 2 Sam 11:11; Ezek 16:5). HS can use the phrase of space not fully integrated into the temple's matrix of holiness (Lev 17:5).

I, I have spoken. This formulaic closure occurred earlier in the book in 23:34 and 28:10, and in 26:5 as the first part of a double closure (as here), that is, with a recognition formula in the next verse. The formula presupposes Zadokite assumptions about God, as shown by its use in expanded form in 17:24: "I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will perform it." One connotation of the divine name, the Tetragrammaton, is "He who brings realities into being" (e.g., Cross [1973, 65] argues for the meaning "He who creates the [heavenly] hosts"). In Ezekiel's book, what the Lord decrees shall be is as good as done, because of God's core identity as sovereign over all emerging reality.

39:6. *Living complacently.* When Ezekiel uses the noun *beṭaḥ* in connection with Israel's future state of blessing, he means it in the sense of security and safety (cf. 28:26; 34:25, 27, 28). There are connotations of overconfidence and complacency, however, when the term is used of enemies (see Ezek 30:9 CEB, NIV, NJB, NET, NLT; Judg 18:7, 10, 27; 2 Kgs 18:19). Interestingly, the LXX seems unaware of the latter sense (it leaves *beṭaḥ* untranslated in Ezek 30:9). It offers a markedly different version of 39:6, in which Gog's destruction brings peace to earth's far corners (see Rösel 2012, 88–89, 252, 412).

Far-off coasts. The coasts and islands of Asia Minor spring immediately to mind with this diction, but note that in the Hebrew Bible the islands and coasts of the Mediterranean Sea are symbolic of the most distant parts of the world (see Ezek 26:15).

39:7. *My holy name.* God's concern with God's "holy name" (also v. 25) has been a distinctive theme in Ezekiel's book. This is obvious in chapter 20, where at vv. 9, 14, 22, 39, and 44, God stresses that God's actions throughout Israel's history have always been primarily for the sake of the divine name and reputation. The motif is specifically Zadokite, coming straight from the HS strand (Lev 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6; 22:2, 32; see Sweeney 2005, 170). It is picked up not only in Ezek 39:7, 25 and in Ezekiel 20, but

also at 36:20–23 and at 43:7–8. Taking the language at face value, some scholars (e.g., Schwartz 2000, 57–58) perceive it to be cold, self-aggrandizing speech. After all, at Ezek 36:32 God specifically states, "It is not for your sake that I will act." Block (2015) and Wu (2016), however, have recently argued cogently for an alternative interpretation, in which Ezekiel's God is less narcissistic and more relational than the diction at first suggests. First, the "holy name" language may be acerbic rhetoric, not factual statement. It may aim primarily to insist that God's deliverance of Israel is *not* in response to Israel's repentance (see Ezek 20:42–44, 36:22). As Greenberg (1997, 735) puts it, God acts apart from any "merit of Israel," while Israel remains "unregenerate." God acts independent of "the chancy repentance of the stonyhearted people" (Ezek 2:4; 3:7; 20:33, 44; 36:26; consult also Renz 1999b, 208–9; Block 2015, 185, 190, 192). Wu incisively explains the text's logic: "What is unholy cannot make itself holy again; it must be made so by what is still holy" (126). Relatedly, the "holy name" language drives home that the universe does not revolve around Israel, but around God and God's intention to convey holiness in the world (as the present verse makes explicit). Second, as Wu (83, 125–26, 170) shows, Ezekiel's "holy name" language is bound up with the Zadokite ideal of Israel's indwelling by God's holiness, radiating from God's Presence (20:41, 44). Again, the connection is explicit in this very verse (on this, see the succeeding Notes). And to "know" (*yāda'*) God in one's midst is to *respond,* sealing a "human-divine relationship" (84, 86). As noted below, editorial shaping in Ezek 39:25–28 fits Wu's reading. The editors of Ezekiel 39 do not see an egoistical God obsessed with honor but a God of mercy.

Nations shall know that I am the Lord. The nations' recognition echoes that of the Egyptians in Exod 14:18 (HS), when Pharaoh and his chariots suffer decisive defeat. Rösel (2012, 341) considers a likely deliberate reference to Exodus 14 here, especially considering Ezekiel's powerful words against Pharaoh elsewhere. (On how Crocodile Pharaoh, Ezek 29:3–7, becomes eschatologized in 39:2–5, see the Comments below.)

Holy One in Israel. The phrase is close to Isaiah's title "Holy One *of* Israel" (e.g., Isa 1:4; 5:19, 24; 10:17; 12:6; 43:3; 55:5). The LXX (except Codex Vaticanus), Vulgate, and Syriac apparently assume that the more familiar Isaian wording must have been what the authors intended. However, the MT's expression, which occurs only here in the Bible, reflects Zadokite theology and is likely original. Whereas the Isaiah school stresses that the Holy One dwells high in otherness (e.g., Isa 57:15), Ezekiel's school portrays God's holiness descending and settling *in* Israel. As HS drives home to Israel, "You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord am dwelling in the midst of the Israelites" (Num 35:34; cf. Num 5:3). Thus, the Targum's paraphrase of v. 17 is right on target: "I have made my Shekinah dwell in Israel." Ezekiel's phrasing about God's presence would be fully unacceptable to the Isaiah school (cf. Isa 40:22, 66:1–2).

39:8. *Look . . . it will happen.* The phrasing is identical to that in Ezek 21:7, a passage judging Israel (also cf. 7:10). The language of 21:7 was perhaps called to mind by a sense in 39:7 that Israel was worthy of rebuke. The subject of the two verbs is indefinite and vague in the Hebrew; indeed, the "dummy pronoun" *it*—feminine in gender—is understood (and actually required in English). As Waltke and O'Connor write (*IBHS* 110, sec. 6.6d), "What, so to speak, is the gender of a situation or an action? Such a dummy or impersonal pronoun is usually feminine" (cf. sec. 4.4.2).

That is the day. The "day" in question is the eschatological "day of the Lord" (see Note *On that day* on 38:10). See Note *Of whom I spoke* on 38:17 for discussion of God's decree that the day of Gog's menace would come (as well as discussion of where such a decree may be found in Scripture). Like Ezek 38:17, the present verse (39:8) appears to be transitional in context and likely one of the later editorial additions to the text.

39:9. *Light them on fire.* The Hebrew clause "light weapons on fire" has a prominent play on words: the verb's root is *nāśaq* (see *HALOT*) and the Hebrew noun "weapons" is *nešeq.* (The preposition *bĕ* marks the object that is kindled.) The generic term for weapons, *nešeq,* is followed by terms for six specific weapons. The use of seven terms in all symbolizes Gog's sweeping, total threat.

39:10. *Loot . . . plunder.* The verse echoes the vocabulary of 38:12–13, reversing Gog's intentions in invading Israel.

Comments

The beginning of chapter 39 sounds very much like a doublet of the early part of Ezekiel 38. Once again, God challenges Gog to a duel (v. 1; cf. 38:3). Once more, God mysteriously manipulates chaos. God arouses it and draws it out from its "mountain crevasses" (v. 2; cf. 38:15). As if leading a monster along on a rope (see Note *Guide you along* on 39:2), God brings Gog against earth's cosmic highlands, the "mountains of Israel" (cf. 38:8).

Then, with v. 3, Ezekiel 39 begins to go its own way. Whereas 38:1–16 merely set the stage, Ezek 39:3–4a describes the great combat, the climax of the Gog prophecies. There is hardly a contest—merely a knock-out blow. God knocks Gog's weapons out of his hands (39:3), and Gog falls dead in battle on the mountains of Israel (39:4a). There is no doubt that here the divine warrior has conquered chaos. Without aid, the Lord alone defeats Gog, so the people of Israel need only perform mop-up operations (39:9–10). Reptilian metaphors and mythic images applied to Pharaoh in Ezek 29:4–5 here become eschatologized. As Tooman (2011, 242) notes, what was figurative now becomes *literal.*

The turn in the text from God's drawing Gog against Israel to God's utter destruction of him is jarring. God guides Gog's momentous attack only to pivot around at the crucial moment in defense of Israel. The book of Joel will later take up and repeat the same mysterious dynamic. The northern chaos that sweeps down against Israel as God's own army (Joel 2:11) suddenly faces God as Israel's defender, who dumps their rotting corpses in wastelands and seas (Joel 2:20). As noted above (see Comments on 38:1–17), God's providential staging of the end-time conflict aims at the definitive establishment of God's fiery, enlivening holiness on earth and the global spread of the "knowledge" of the Lord (Ezek 39:6–7). Here, Ezekiel 39 is one with HS, which likewise deems it crucial to humanity's fate that God now act in irresistible sovereignty (e.g., Exod 9:35; 10:1–2, 20, 27; 14:18, all HS). Without a God-orchestrated resolution, terrestrial existence remains locked in the old archetypal tension between life force and chaos, fecundity and death.

Gog's defeat is sure and swift, but the aftermath of the battle is complex and extended. Verses 4b–10 of chapter 39 narrate the cosmic repercussions of God's victory

as well as some of the ancillary benefits to Israel. Lest anyone doubt that God's victory over chaos has been of apocalyptic proportion and moment, v. 6 describes God's fiery destruction of all northern demonic regions from which Gog hailed.

As Radak notes, one should take v. 6 literally: God rains down fire and brimstone on Gog's homeland. God's victory is cosmic: it overturns the fabled terrain of evil. Zechariah 6:8 describes the same achievement. There, sun-chariots of the temple (see 2 Kgs 23:11) transfigure and are hitched to God's horses (cf. Zech 1:7–17). They enter the world through twin peaks on the horizon, morphed from temple pillars (see 1 Kgs 7:15–16, Gen 49:26; "the two hills at the edge of the earth" in the Ugaritic texts, *KTU* 1.4.VII.4). Particularly in the north, they "vent the anger of [God's] spirit" (v. 8; NRSV: "set my spirit at rest").

Ezekiel 39:8 echoes the conviction of 38:17 that God's cosmic victory is a predetermined matter of written Scripture. Israel's prophets have recorded and archived their expectation of the great eschatological day of the Lord. Its coming, the Zadokites know, is as certain as was the tragic fate of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. Like Ezek 38:17, v. 8 of the present passage is an editorial transition. What follows in vv. 9–10 is Israel's mop-up operation after the great battle has already been won by the divine warrior.

Verse 9 describes Israel making huge bonfires of Gog's weapons in an effort to dispose of them. The weapons of Gog's humongous army are so numerous that they supply God's people with fuel for their homes for seven years. The seven years needed to burn up the wood shows the vastness of Gog's weaponry and also recalls the sabbatical cycle of HS (see Lev 25:1–7). Ezekiel 39:9 understands that the land of Israel gets to enjoy an entire (seven-year) Sabbath-cycle of Sabbath-year respites (cf. Lev 26:34, 43 HS). Daniel 9:24 will later speak of weeks of years with similar reference to sabbatical thinking.

The motif of reversal of Gog's and Israel's fortunes is hard to miss in our passage. Gog had launched his attack on an Israel "living securely" (38:8, 14; cf. 28:26; 34:27, 28); now God's fire comes upon a Magog homeland "living securely," that is, "complacently," on far-off coasts (see Note *Living complacently* on 39:6). Whereas Gog invaded Israel to "loot" and "plunder" (38:12–13), so now Israel loots its looters and plunders its plunderers (39:10). There is obvious poetic justice here, as well as an echo of the exodus, during which Israel "plundered the Egyptians" (Exod 3:22, 11:2, 12:36).

Sacred Feasting on Gog (39:17–20)

39 [17]As for you, Human One, Message from the Sovereign Lord: Command every kind of bird and every wild animal: Assemble and come! Gather around my sacrificial feast that I am slaughtering for you—a great sacrificial feast upon the mountains of Israel. You should eat flesh and drink blood. [18]You will eat the flesh of champions and drink the blood of earth's leaders—rams, lambs, goats, and bulls, all fattened animals from Bashan. [19]So you will eat fat until you are glutted, and drink blood until you are drunk, at my sacrificial feast that I am slaughtering for you. [20]You will gorge yourselves at my table with horses and riders, with champions and all kinds of soldiers—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

Notes

39:17. *Message . . . Lord.* The messenger formula is unusually placed. It would normally follow God's command to prophesy to the wild animals. However, as at 39:25, the formula may simply function to drive home to the literary figure of Ezekiel, and to the reader, the absolute decisiveness of God's determination of what shall be.

Drink blood. In normal sacrifices, the participants would not "drink blood." At Lev 3:17, HS states, "It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, in all your settlements: you must not eat any fat or any blood." The blood belongs to God and makes atonement (cf. Lev 17:11–12 HS; Ezek 44:7, 15). The "fat" of the sacrifice (see v. 19) also belongs exclusively to God (e.g., Lev 17:6, 23–25 HS). As argued in the Comments, however, this is a metaphorical *marzēaḥ* feast, an institution known from Ugarit and elsewhere associated with wine drinking. The Ugaritic text *KTU* 1.114.1 associates the *marzēaḥ* with the diction of "sacrifice." In Ezekiel, the animals are the elite guests, and the slaughtered troops' blood is the wine on which they become drunk.

39:18. *Earth's leaders.* The text here speaks of other national leaders accompanying Gog into battle. (See Note *Coalition leader* on 38:2 for discussion of Gog as heading up a coalition of regional powers.) In addition, the Hebrew phrase *nĕśî'ê hā'āreṣ* can

also be read in context in v. 18 as meaning "chieftains of the underworld." On "underworld" or "Sheol" as a possible meaning of *ʾereṣ,* see Exod 15:12; Jer 17:13; Jonah 2:6 (MT 2:7); Pss 22:30, 71:20; and Sir 51:9. Note that *gibbôrîm,* which appears earlier in Ezek 39:18 as a term parallel to *nĕśîʾê hāʾāreṣ,* invokes the thought of the fallen warriors in Sheol of Ezek 32:26–27 (see the Comments).

Rams . . . bulls. The great metaphorical feasting feeds on traditional sacrificial animals ranging from rams to bulls, as if the troops were so many beasts of Israel's herds. The metaphor came naturally, since in Hebrew, as in Ugaritic, animal names were commonly used for leaders (see Miller 1970, 177–78). Targum Jonathan, however, abandons the metaphor.

From Bashan. Bashan, an area of rich pastureland in northern Transjordan, east of the Sea of Galilee, was renowned for its prized, fattened herds (Deut 32:14, Ps 22:12, Amos 4:1). God's invitation is enticing: the choicest grain-fed animals will be served. The VOICE translation speaks of "the finest, meatiest animals in all of lush Bashan!" In light of the resonances of Gog's army with the living-dead warriors of Sheol (see Ezek 32:26–27; Notes *Valley of the Passers-On* on 39:11 and *Earth's leaders* on 39:18), Bashan's associations with living-dead *rephaim* are notable (see Bøe 2001, 60). Deuteronomy 3:13 reads, "All of Bashan . . . was often called Rephaim Country" (CEB). In Deut 3:1, 13 and 4:47, Codex Vaticanus associates Gog with Og of Bashan, a survivor of the *rephaim* (see Deut 3:11; Josh 12:4, 13:12).

39:19. *Eat fat.* Just as with blood (see Note *Drink blood* on 39:17), the HS texts prohibit Israelites from eating the fat of sacrifices. Ramban notes that suet is the most highly regarded part of an animal sacrifice. (Compare how Gen 45:18 speaks of living off the *fat* of the land.) God receives the fat because God holds the place of honor among all participants at a sacrifice. This view fits the anthropomorphic conception of God in HS texts, specifically with the HS language about the fat providing a "soothing aroma" to God (Lev 3:16–17, 17:6; Num 18:17, all HS). Abarbanel offered an additional Midrashic explanation for treating the blood and fat of a sacrifice as special: Blood represents the red of sin, fat the white of forgiveness (see Isa 1:18). That 39:19 has fat consumed by the creaturely participants at the sacrifice reminds readers that this is an unnerving ritual.

Drunk. The vocabulary is strikingly reminiscent of the feasting of the gods in Ugaritic text *KTU* 1.114.3–4. Just as the gods "drink [*štn*] wine to satiety [*šbʿ*], new wine to drunkenness [*škr*]," the birds and wild animals of Ezek 39:19 "eat fat until . . . glutted [*śobʿâ*], and drink [*šĕtîtem*] blood until . . . drunk [*šikkārôn*]." The association of wine and blood is at least as old as the Ugaritic texts, which, like Gen 49:11 and Deut 32:14, refer to wine as the "blood of grapes." Such language can be negative in Scripture, as when wild drunkenness or overflowing winepresses become stunning metaphors of divine judgment (Deut 32:42, Isa 49:26, Joel 3:13, Isa 63:3, Rev 14:17–20).

39:20. *My table.* Ezekiel always employs the word *šulḥān* in a specialized sense as the table for slaughtering sacrifices (40:39–43, 41:22, 44:16; cf. 23:41, Mal 1:7). The phrase "my table" rings with Zadokite anthropomorphic assumptions about God (see Note *My table* on 44:16). Compare the language of 44:7, "my temple . . . my house . . . my food."

Riders. The vocabulary echoes that in 38:15. The Hebrew *rekeb* often refers to a war chariot or chariots but also to their crews, and perhaps (cf. NJPS, NRSV, NET)

to an individual charioteer (Ps 76:7) or to a chariot horse (2 Sam 8:4; see McLaughlin 2001, 206 n. 50; Joyce 2007a, 217; cf. NJB: "chargers"). Perhaps paired with "horse" it forms a hendiadys that means "mounted horse" (cf. CEB, NABR, NIV). I have followed this latter suggestion. Many such mounted horses appear in the 1852 painting "God's Judgment Upon Gog" by Asher Brown Durand (viewable at https://goo.gl/W8TDV4).

Comments

In the present literary form of Ezekiel 39, this section (vv. 17–20) offers an additional vignette or type scene that explores the aftermath of Gog's downfall from a new and different angle. In doing so, the text doubles back to v. 4, returning to a point in time before the great Israelite effort of burying Gog's dead. As of 39:4, Gog's troops have fallen out in the wild, dead to a man, so that their bodies lie exposed to every kind of predatory animal. Primordial patterns have been recapitulated, as the mythological truth of Ps 74:12–14 is realized in real time, in end time: "You [God] broke the heads of the dragons. . . . You crushed the heads of Leviathan; you gave him as food for the creatures of the wilderness." Ezekiel 39:17–20 has clear formal boundaries, being introduced by the messenger formula of v. 17 and brought to a close with the utterance formula of v. 20.

In 39:17–20, the image of mass feasting in 39:4 gives rise to a vision of a great sacrificial festival. God speaks of a "sacrificial feast" three times, uses the verb "sacrifice" twice, and employs other sacrificial terminology (see Note *My table* on 39:20). Depicting judgment as God's preparation of a grand sacred meal, with guests invited, is not new (see Isa 34:6, Jer 46:10, Zeph 1:7). The image of readying a banquet commended itself to Ezekiel's Zadokite authors as an appealing anthropomorphic depiction (the language of Ezek 20:41 is comparable). What is more, the image drove home the utter degradation with which Gog must meet his fate. He must supply the main course for unclean beasts, not the festal meal of any real sacrifice of God and Israel. To be eaten by beasts and birds is a classic ancient West Asian and Hebrew Bible curse. Like Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kgs 22:38, 2 Kgs 9:36), Gog is literally fed to the dogs!

Ezekiel 39 carefully avoids the thought of God drinking blood until sated, as the birds and animals do in v. 19. Such care is in keeping with the tradition of other biblical writers. In Deut 32:42, what drinks its fill of blood is God's *arrows,* and in Jer 46:10 it is the Lord's *sword* that does so. Similarly, in Isa 34:5–7 it is specifically the divine sword, not the deity, that becomes filled with blood. In Ezekiel 39, not even God's arrows or sword drinks the blood of Gog's troops, only unclean beasts. Neither does Israel join in the feast.

The Zadokites, unlike some other biblical writers, had no problem with God consuming the normal sacrifices of temple worship ("my food," Ezek 44:7; see Lev 21:6, 8, 17, 21, 22; 22:25, all HS). Ezekiel's group, however, held that treating humans as blood sacrifices for divine consumption ("for food," Ezek 23:37) was an abomination (see also 16:20, 20:31; Lev 18:21, 20:2, both HS). Details in Ezekiel 39 confirm that Gog's sacrifice is a shocking, irregular rite (see Notes *Drink blood* on 39:17 and *Eat fat* on 39:19).

Given a sacred feast, are readers to imagine a victory sacrifice, with feasting in thanksgiving for Gog's death? Or, is this a ritual that devotes all spoils to the divine

warrior, who has won victory unaided? (On the theme of *ḥērem,* see, e.g., Josh 2:10, 6:17; the Moabite Mesha stele.) These connotations are doubtless present, but the bacchanalian features suggest that a different theme is central here. Ezekiel's animalized ritual feasting appears primarily to be a mock sacred drinking banquet, a satirical *marzēaḥ* (see Irwin 1995; McLaughlin 2001, 196–213; Joyce 2007a, 217).

The focus of Ezekiel 39 on wild inebriation reflects a conventional ancient Near Eastern scene known from other biblical texts and from Ugarit: a sacred feast termed the *marzēaḥ.* This institution—also mentioned or alluded to in Hos 4:16–19; Amos 4:1; 6:1, 4–7; Isa 28:7–8; and Jer 16:5–9—was an upper-class, wine-drinking feast connected to a patron deity (on the *marzēaḥ,* see McLaughlin 2001; Lewis 1989, 80–94; Pope 1981, 176–79). Drunkenness was a major purpose. Scholars differ on whether to identify the *marzēaḥ* specifically as a cult of dead kin (consult Lewis 1989, 80–94), but it certainly sometimes convened as an occasion revolving around the deceased (see Jer 16:5–9; Pope 1981). As observed above (see Note *Drunk* on 39:19), Ezek 39:19 strikingly echoes the description of the god El's heavenly *marzēaḥ* in *KTU* 1.114.3–4. Both the Ugaritic and the biblical texts use the same language of drinking, satiety, and drunkenness. The Ugaritic equivalent (*dbḥ*) of the Hebrew verb *zābaḥ* (sacrifice) also occurs in *KTU* 1.114.1.

Texts such as Deut 32:42, Isa 49:26, Jdt 6:4, and Rev 17:6 (see Note *Drunk* on 39:19) contradict McLaughlin's (2001, 209) bald assertion that "Ezek 39:19 is the only place in the entire Bible where blood causes drunkenness." Ezekiel 39:17–20 stands out, nonetheless, in jumping so directly from "blood" to "drunkenness" and in setting the latter motif within a constellation of typological elements associated with the *marzēaḥ.*

For example, the double reference to "champions" (*gibbôrîm*) in 39:18, 20 is no coincidence. Ezekiel 32:27 earlier spoke of the *gibbôrîm* as fallen warriors in Sheol. Even now, "the terror of the mighty men is in the land of the living" (CEB). These *gibbôrîm* (see also 32:21) are among the ranks of the Rephaim (see 1 Chr 20:6, 8), heroic and royal shades with whom Near Easterners communed in cults of the dead like the *marzēaḥ.* Isaiah 26:13–14 expresses trust that enemy Rephaim will not rise from Sheol. The God of Israel has the power to prevent ancestor cults from summoning the *gibbôrîm.*

The root *šākar* (become drunk) appears specially chosen in Ezek 39:19. On the basis of Isa 34:5, 7 and Jer 46:10, the two texts closest to our passage in theme, we might have expected the root *rāwâ* (drink one's fill) to have been placed parallel to "be glutted." Instead, inebriation is highlighted. This is additional strong evidence that Ezek 39:17–20 presents a satirical image of a *marzēaḥ,* where the rites could involve a great amount of sacred intoxication.

Ezekiel 39 is probably *not* quoting an actual Ugaritic text. (Ugarit's texts were now long buried.) Rather, it alludes to the language and images of sacred banqueting with heroes' shades that long survived Ugarit's fall. The Ezekiel authors take up language of banqueting with departed souls (see Note *Meshech and Tubal* on 38:2) and project it as an eschatological feast with those "passing on" to Sheol (see Note *Those passing on* on 39:14). They transform the dinner guests from deities into birds and beasts. Since Ezekiel depicts a metaphorical *marzēaḥ* within the animal kingdom, the standard topos-element of the banqueting sprawlers being aristocrats is dropped.

Such eschatologizing of ancient rites and mythic topoi is characteristic of the millennial imagination within Israelite religion. The Ezekiel group was highly familiar with a great variety of topoi and archetypes and made prominent literary and theological use of them (e.g., Ezek 28:11–19; 31; 32:1–16, 17–32). This made the group a prime candidate for the emergence of an early apocalyptic worldview within Israel.

Whether or not McLaughlin (2001) is correct that the connections of the *marzēaḥ* with cults of dead kin are clear only by 700 BCE in Isa 28:7–22 and, about a century later, in Jer 16:5–9, they are certainly present in Ezekiel 39. Ezekiel's birds and beasts are indeed taking part in a feast for dead Gog, drunken revelry with dead shades. The satire, of course, is that the sprawlers are not honoring departed family members. They have come to the feast to consume the departed souls' corpses! Their attendance is merely for the sake of the copious "alcohol" and abundant food. Scholars contest whether an association of the *marzēaḥ* with the cult of the dead is already present at Ugarit. In my view, it surely was. Of all possible divine guests at the drunken banquet of the gods in *KTU* 1.21.II, the text speaks six times of the chthonic shades known as the Rephaim.

Israel Restored to the Land (39:21–29)

39 [21]I will display my glory among the nations, so all the nations will see my sentence that I have enforced, and my hand that I have laid on them. [22]The House of Israel will know that I am the Lord their God, from that day forward. [23]And the nations will know that the House of Israel went into exile because of their guilt. Because they betrayed me, I hid my face from them, handing them over to their enemies, so they all fell by the sword. [24]As their defilement and their crimes warranted, I treated them, hiding my face from them.

[25]Therefore, Message from the Sovereign Lord: Now I will return Jacob, have mercy on the whole House of Israel, and be zealous for my holy name. [26]They will bear their shame and their responsibility for all the treachery they have practiced against me, when they live securely on their land with no one to make them afraid. [27]When I bring them back from the peoples and gather them from the lands of their enemies, then I will manifest my holiness in them for the many nations to see. [28]Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, because I sent them into exile among the nations and then gathered them back to their own soil. I will leave none of them in exile any longer. [29]I will never again hide my face from them, when I pour out my spirit upon the House of Israel—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

Notes

39:21. *Display my glory.* Wagner (2012, 284, 341) finds this a new use of the term *kābôd* (glory) in Ezekiel, deriving from the traditional poetic motif of the nations' surrender and submission to God (e.g., Psalm 96). God manifests divine glory by defeating Gog (see Note *Show my glory* on 39:13), winning the victory in a "hands-on" manner that suggests divine embodiment ("the hand I lay on them," NIV; cf. NABR). The anthropomorphic language places God's Presence (*kābôd*) amid the nations, with phraseology reminiscent of God's earlier setting of Jerusalem amid the nations (Ezek 5:5). Thus, I agree with Pieter de Vries (2016, 296) that God's Presence (*kābôd*) here "must be under-

stood as a physicality, just as when He took up residence in the Tabernacle" (Exod 40:34–38 HS).

My sentence. The term *mišpāṭ* (sentence/judgment) appears here in the sense of executing the outcome of a judicial case (see NJB; cf. NLT: "Everyone will see the punishment I have inflicted on them").

Hand that I have laid. The precise idiom is rare in the Hebrew Bible. As a metaphor, it means "assert authority over" (1 Kgs 20:6, 2 Kgs 11:16), "extend dominion over" (Ps 89:25). As in the preceding clause, God enforces a judicial sentence. Probably, however, the clause pushes beyond bare metaphor to add an anthropomorphic image of God's tangible, "bodily" presence (cf. NLT).

39:22. *I am the* LORD *their God.* The rare locution here and in v. 28 stems from Exod 29:46 (HS); see also Lev 26:44 (HS). Consult Rösel 2012, 341.

That day forward. The adverb *hālēʾâ* employed in the temporal sense of "onward," "forward" is a Zadokite usage of HS and Ezekiel (Lev 22:27, Num 15:23, Ezek 43:27).

39:23. *Because of their guilt.* As noted by Rösel (2012, 341 n. 963), the phrase is one of several specific echoes of Leviticus 26 (HS) in Ezek 39:23–26. Here, see Lev 26:39 (HS). Another example is the diction of delivery into enemy hands (see Lev 26:25); also see the succeeding NOTE, and see NOTE *Securely* on 39:26. Against Rösel, I would not contrast Ezek 39:23–26 and Leviticus 26 on the basis of the former text's emphasis on God's advocacy of the holy name. Such advocacy is a notable HS motif (see NOTE *Holy name* on 39:25).

Betrayed me. The verb *māʿal* is a favorite one of Ezekiel (see 14:13, 15:8, 17:20, 18:24, 20:27). But, beyond this, the vocabulary of 39:23 again specifically echoes Lev 26:39–40 (HS), both repeating the clause *ʾăšer māʿălû-bî,* which signifies violating sacral legal obligations to God, and speaking of "their guilt." Verse 26 of this section of Ezekiel is the only other occurrence of the string *ʾăšer māʿălû-bî* outside of Lev 26:40.

Hid my face. The hiding of God's face is a theme of the section, with this language occurring three times (vv. 23, 24, 29). The highly anthropomorphic idiom is not found previously in Ezekiel but is known from the psalms and other prophets (e.g., Pss 10:11, 13:1, 22:24, 27:9; Isa 8:17; Jer 33:5). Bodi (2009, 488) cites several ancient Near Eastern parallels. As Balentine (1983, 161) notes, the prophets transform an established complaint of suppliants in laments into a divine response to disobedience. In this, the metaphor bursts beyond an acute, circumscribed experience voiced in worship to become a radical turn within salvation history. Here in Ezek 39:21–29, God's hiddenness is the direct result of Israel's breaking of the HS covenant, as shown by the echoes of Lev 26:39–40 (see preceding NOTES). It also fits the characteristically high sensitivity of Ezekiel's God to moral and ceremonial defilement (see the succeeding verse, 39:24).

39:24. *Defilement.* The term *ṭumʾâ* refers to Israel's state of ceremonial and moral impurity (on the nature of moral impurity, see Klawans 2000, 26–31). In the Zadokites' theology, moral impurity defiles God's dwelling place in Israel's midst and leads directly to Israel's death (Lev 15:31 HS; Ezek 36:17–18, echoing Lev 18:19 HS). According to the HS strand, individuals to whom impurity clings endanger all Israel and must be "cut off" from the Lord (Lev 22:3, Num 19:13). For Ezekiel, purification from *ṭumʾâ* is an essential element in God's continuing relationship with Israel after the exile (Ezek 22:15; 24:13; 36:25, 29; cf. Zech 13:2).

39:25. *Return Jacob.* The Hebrew expression, which entails a wordplay, literally says that God will "turn the turnings of Jacob." The idiom is a technical expression for reversing misfortunes, for restoring to a sound, whole condition. The Aramaic Sefire texts (eighth century BCE) contain the expression, "The gods restored the fortunes of the house of my father (my dynasty) again" (*HALOT*). Since texts such as Sefire, Ezek 16:53, and Job 42:10 do not relate to captivity or exile, translations such as "bring back the captives" (CEB; cf. NLT, NJB, BDB 986) represent only one of the idiom's several possible senses. They may, however, accord with the MT vowels of *šĕbût,* which seem based on the term's eventual association with the root *šābâ,* "to lead captive" (see *HALOT*).

Have mercy. Language of God's having mercy/compassion (*rāḥam*) on Israel occurs only here in Ezekiel's book. For discussion, see the Comments.

Holy name. On the meaning of God's concern for the divine name, see Note *My holy name* on 39:7. The idiom comes straight from the HS strand (Lev 18:21; 19:12; 20:3; 21:6; 22:2, 32). Ezekiel 39:25 confirms the point made earlier that Ezekiel's "holy name" language need not *necessarily* represent cold, egoistic speech. Editors here hold this language to be compatible with a belief that God interrelates with Israel in mercy/compassion (*rāḥam*). The Zadokite anthropopathic language of God zealously campaigning on behalf of God's name, land, and people is characteristic of the Ezekiel school and later prophets tied closely to it (see Ezek 20:39; 36:5–6, 17, 21, 22; 43:7–8; Joel 2:18; Zech 1:14, 8:2). Anja Klein (2008, 140–68) explores a particularly close relationship between the present text and Ezek 36:16–23, with its triple mention of God's holy name.

39:26. *Bear their shame.* On the root *nāśāʾ* (bear) acting like a 3-*h* verb here, see *GKC* 216, sec. 75qq. Emending the Hebrew root from *ś* to *š* yields "they will forget their shame," which several modern translations judge to better fit the present context of restoration (NRSV, NABR, CEB, NIV, NJB). The emendation, however, is unsupported by the versions and is misguided (see NJPS, NET, NLT; Block 1998, 478 n. 84, 486). As Ezek 16:52–54 has insisted, God's will is that the people *do* bear shame (cf. 43:10–11; consult Wu 2016, 122–23). Although bearing shame certainly entails accepting judgment, in Ezekiel's book it also has constructive import. Thus, at Ezek 44:13, "bearing shame" is clearly part of being set right, not about being demoted and humiliated (see Duke 1988, 67–70). As discussed in the passage's treatment below, Ezekiel 44 *restores* the Levites to an ideal state (as envisioned in Num 18:1–7 HS). That shame is a restorative part of Israel's regeneration is characteristic of Ezekiel (see 16:54, 61; 36:32; 43:10–11). Lapsley (2000a), Poser (2012), and others have argued that shame at being disgraced ("disgrace-shame") is constructive in the book. God loads Israel with shame in Ezekiel 16 and 23 (e.g., 16:52–54), Lapsley (145–48) argues, precisely because a total lack of shame prevents the people from acknowledging that anything is wrong. Restoration requires that they see themselves as YHWH does (Bowen 2010, 90). Note that none of this is about Israel enduring the nations' insults. YHWH intends to put an end to that (Ezek 34:29; 36:6–7, 15).

The treachery they have practiced. See Note *Betrayed me* on 39:23.

When they live. In contrast to the NIV and NJB, the infinitive construct *bĕšibtām* must point ahead to Israel's future, as it did in 38:14. As shown by 39:25 ("Now I will return Jacob [from exile]"), the restoration state of 38:14 lies in the future

in the perspective of our verse. It is very hard to imagine what era is in view in the NIV and NJB, when Israel *both* practiced treachery *and* lived securely. Ezekiel's book understands treachery to provoke the curses of the HS covenant, creating immediate *insecurity* for Israel (e.g., 4:5, "three hundred ninety . . . years of punishment"). Thus, the NLT has the correct sense: "They will accept responsibility . . . after they come home to live in peace."

Securely. The full string "live securely . . . with no one to make them afraid" occurred earlier in Ezek 34:28, while the shorter idiom "living securely" appeared most recently in 39:6 of the northern invaders' homelands (cf. 30:9). It is usually a description of Israel's ideal state (see Ezek 28:26; 34:27, 28; cf. Lev 25:18–19, 26:5 HS), a state that Israel will be enjoying when Gog attacks (Ezek 38:8, 11, 14; see the preceding Note). The specific language combining the elements of living securely on the land and no one making the people afraid does not occur outside of Ezekiel and HS (in Lev 26:5–6).

39:27. *Manifest my holiness.* The language of God showing the divine self as holy in the sight of onlookers is native to HS and Ezekiel (see Num 20:13 HS; Ezek 20:41; 28:22, 25; 36:23; 38:16). The Zadokites celebrate the manifestation of God's dread sanctity in the sight of all.

39:28. *Sent them . . . the nations.* The clause is unique, although Ezek 36:20 speaks similarly of exiled Israel coming to the nations. The language intimates a widespread exile (with refugees in many countries) and thus a global recognition of God at Israel's restoration (see v. 27). The following scribal plus in the MT expands on this intimation.

Gathered them back. The words begin a long MT plus over against the Old Greek that runs to the end of the verse. Amid scholarly disagreement on the words' originality, Mackie (2015, 118–19) argues that they represent a secondary scribal expansion. The verb *kānas* (gather, collect) occurs just eleven times in the Bible, only in Late Biblical Hebrew. Ezekiel's book uses it elsewhere only once (22:21, another MT plus, not about restoration). Psalm 147:2 parallels the usage here and may draw on Ezekiel. Motifs from other psalms, Job, and Isaiah 40–66 appear throughout Psalm 147.

Leave none. Here the MT plus of v. 28 expresses a rare notion of completely universal restoration, which also occurs as an Old Greek plus in Zech 10:10 (and in Second Temple texts, e.g., Sir 36:13, 51:12; Pss. Sol. 11; Bar 4:36–37). With this clause, the plus reveals its aim as magnifying God's ingathering (vv. 26–28a; Mackie 2015, 119).

39:29. *My spirit.* Ezekiel's book shows a thoughtful use of the term *rûaḥ* in all of its rich senses, sometimes delighting in deploying the noun in all of its poetic ambiguity. Thus, in Ezek 37:9 the term means first "wind" and then "breath" in a single clause: "Come from the four winds, O breath." At Ezek 2:2, the reader imagines both a *wind* setting the prophet on his feet (CEB, NET) and a *spirit* entering his body (NRSV, NABR, NJPS). Compare the ambiguity of Ps 104:29–30, where *rûaḥ* refers both to God's animating breath and to God's presence (*pānîm*). For a recent study (with full bibliography) of the spirit as a mode of divine presence, see MacDonald (2013). Within Ezekiel's book, the phrase "my spirit" occurs only here and in 36:27 and 37:14. The language is picked up in Joel 2:28, 29 (MT 3:1, 2) and Zech 4:6. Relatedly, Joel follows Ezekiel in speaking of God "pouring out" the spirit, as does Zech 12:10. Discussion continues in the Comments.

Comments

The summarizing section in Ezek 39:21–29 rounds off both the Gog prophecies and the larger collection of prophecies of Israel's restoration beginning in chapter 33. It displays a strong feel for symmetry. The inference of Joyce (2007a, 217–18) seems reasonable that the summary was added by redactors using "house style" and "systematizing" phrases. The "sentence" to which v. 21 refers is the judgment on Gog that has been thoroughly described from several angles in chapters 38–39. The language of God's bringing Israel back from the nations in v. 27 specifically echoes 38:8 (which also uses the *polel* stem of *šûb*).

The passage has two parts, divided by the messenger formula and the transitional "therefore" in v. 25. Each part ends with a reference to God hiding God's face (vv. 24, 29). The first part stresses, using language of symmetry, that God has judged *both* Gog *and* Israel. For this reason, the nations can acknowledge God's glory and Israel can enter into real knowledge of the people's Lord, their pure, holy God. What is more, as of 39:21–24, the entire world can finally see that massive sin and deathful pollution caused Israel's exile, not any powerlessness or defect of God (see Rashi).

The second part shifts back to "real time." Readers find themselves back in Babylonia with the exiles. God is only "now" about to "return Jacob" from exile. God summarizes the promises of the restoration, emphasizing the bearing of shame (see Note *Bear their shame* on 39:26) and the HS motif of the manifestation of holiness within Israel (see Note *Manifest my holiness* on 39:27). Verse 29 rounds off the passage with God's pouring out of "my spirit" and with a prophetic utterance formula.

Ezekiel 39:25–28 no longer shows the intense preoccupation with Gog's end-time attack and overwhelming downfall that characterized 38:1–39:20. There is certainly no sign of the radicalized eschatology of the expansions in 38:18–23 and 39:11–16. Rather, the perspective shifts back to the relationship of God and Israel within ongoing history. The writers focus on the return from exile of God's people, in whom God manifests God's holiness (v. 27, quoting Lev 22:32 HS) in the nations' sight (see Ezek 36:23) and on whom God pours out God's spirit (v. 29; see Ezek 36:27, 37:14).

The Zadokite emphasis on God's holy name (v. 25), a theme from HS (see Note *Holy name* on 39:25), now reappears (see 39:7). As argued above, the tendentious rhetoric likely aims primarily to highlight the sovereign, irresistible power of God to triumph over the dread hold on Israel of apostasy and death. It shifts the focus of Israel's people off of themselves and onto God and God's determination to sanctify God's people, making them holy. On this, see Lev 22:32 (HS): "You shall not profane my holy name, that I may be sanctified among the people of Israel: I am the Lord; I sanctify you."

In 39:25, Ezekiel's editors introduce a startling perspective on God's relationship with Israel that has not been explicit earlier in the book. Redaction here claims that divine *compassion* lies hidden behind Ezekiel's icy-sounding rhetoric of God acting solely for the sake of God's holy name, which Israel has profaned (Ezek 36:22, 32; cf. 20:9, 44). The verb *rāḥam* occurs only here in Ezekiel, although Zadokites employ it again in Zech 1:12 and 10:6. In these texts at least some Zadokites understand God's ultimate disposition toward Israel to entail warm feelings (consult Ganzel 2010; Block 2015, 181). In the holistic shape of Ezekiel 39, with v. 25 included, God's acting with

sovereign, irresistible force (not waiting for Israel's repentance) does not negate God's emotional attachment, God's tender love. Verse 25 specifically holds both ideas together. In this perspective, the previous absence of all talk of God's care has been dialectical negation, cleverly apposing dual truths: God's irresistible triumph and God's merciful love.

Echoing Ezek 36:27 and 37:14, v. 29 speaks of the Lord's spirit (*rûaḥ*) poured out. The implications beg for clarification. Is the reader to understand the divine "spirit" here to represent a mode of God's presence, akin to the role of Wisdom in Prov 8:22–31 or of God's *kābôd* (Presence/glory) in HS (e.g., Exod 29:43)? Several scholars think not. Thus, Greenberg (1997) has defended a minimalist approach to the phrase "my spirit" in Ezek 36:27. He references Ps 143:10 and speaks of the spirit only as an "impulsion to goodness" (730). So too, modern translations of Ezek 37:14 such as the CEB, NJPS, and NET speak of God implanting restored Israel merely with "my breath," not with "my spirit." Such understandings may well be impoverished.

The spirit actually *is* God's presence in certain relatively late biblical texts. Haggai 2:5, perhaps drawing on Ezekiel 39, has God speak of the divine spirit about to station itself among the people. Significantly, Haggai cross-references Exod 29:45, 46 (HS), a promise of God's *very Presence* dwelling among the Israelites. Two other texts, Ps 51:11 and Isa 63:10–11, describe an actual "holy" spirit of God. In the latter of these instances, the spirit has personality. The people both rebel against and grieve God's "holy spirit." For a recent study of the spirit as an actual divine Presence, see MacDonald (2013).

Whether or not the spirit is a personal presence in Ezek 39:29, the text must assume that God's *rûaḥ* adds to the restoration something lacking in God's presence as the *kābôd* indwelling the temple. Apparently, this "extra" divine gift entails the empowerment and ennoblement of *individual members* of Israel (see MacDonald 2013). Whereas the *kābôd* is localized in the central shrine, the Lord's *rûaḥ* associates itself with people, empowering and equipping them beyond all conventional resources. Thus, Zech 7:12 conceives of God inspiring former prophets to speak "by his spirit." Isaiah's Servant of the Lord appears on the scene tightly knit with God's spirit (Isa 48:16b). In Zech 4:6, only empowerment by God's spirit allows Zerubbabel to usher in God's reign.

The outpouring of the spirit in Ezek 39:29 thus surely means human empowerment. Drawing on this verse, Zech 12:10 equates a pouring out of God's spirit with empowerment to become ideally human, capable of compassion and prayer. In Ezekiel 37, the spirit enables Israel finally to be able to walk by God's statutes that bring life. The dry bones of the vision experience a new creation that raises Israel alive as "my people," with "my spirit." Editorial elaboration of Ezekiel 37 in Ezek 36:26–28 draws out the significance of the gift of new spirit to the dry bones of Israel. It clarifies that God's spirit, now inside the people, will make it possible for them to do what God tells them, to follow God's commands. In this, they will find life (Lev 18:5 HS; Ezek 20:21, 33:15).

The Temple Compound and Gate Towers (40:1–27)

40 [1]In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year on the tenth of the month—it was the fourteenth year after the city was struck down—on that very day, the hand of the LORD was upon me, and he brought me there. [2]By means of divine visions he brought me to the land of Israel, and he set me down on a very high mountain. Upon it to the south was what looked like a city structure. [3]When he brought me there—look: a man, whose appearance seemed like bronze, with a linen measuring cord and a measuring stick in his hand. He was standing at the [compound's eastern] gatehouse. [4]The man said to me, "Human One, see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and note well all that I am about to show you. That is why you have been brought here: to be shown. Declare all that you are about to see to the House of Israel."

[5]And look: a wall on the outside of the temple compound all around. The length of the measuring stick in the man's hand was 10 ½ feet (based on a measuring standard of a cubit and a handbreadth [that is, 18 inches plus 3 inches]). He measured the thickness of the wall as 10 ½ feet, and its height as 10 ½ feet.

[6]Then he went into the east gatehouse complex, ascending its front steps. He measured the threshold area of the gate [that is, the foyer area spanning the outer compound wall] as 10 ½ feet deep [front to back]. [7][On each side of the gatehouse corridor were three guard alcoves.] Each alcove was 10 ½ feet square, with a distance between them [along the corridor's walls] of 8 ¾ feet. [Beyond the alcoves, farther along the gateway passage,] the gatehouse's [second, inner] threshold area was 10 ½ feet deep. This is the area leading to a [final area, an] entry porch [or narthex,] oriented on the *inside* of the temple compound. [8]Then he measured the porch/narthex itself (the one facing the inside of the temple compound) as 10 ½ feet deep. [9]Now, he measured the [full, inclusive length of the] porch/narthex of the gatehouse as 14 feet deep, since its jamb-posts were 3 ½ feet thick. (Now the porch/narthex of the gatehouse was located at its *inner* [western] end [opening into the temple courtyard].)

[10][Again,] inside the east gatehouse, there were three guard alcoves on each side, all three of the same size. The piers between them were also identical. [11]He measured the entrance of the gatehouse as 17 ½ feet wide at the initial opening and 22 ¾ feet wide in the corridor. [12]A [protruding] curb running along the alcoves extended out 1 ¾ feet [into the corridor,] [forming a barrier] in front of them on each side, and each of the alcoves was 10 ½ feet square. [13]Then he measured the width of the gatehouse from outer ceiling edge of alcove to outer ceiling edge of alcove, 43 ¾ feet right across the corridor and through the alcove doorways. [14]Then he made out the height of the porch's pilasters: 105 feet. The gatehouse perimeter [bounded by the temple's outer courtyard] encompassed these pilasters, [which abutted] the courtyard. [15]The full length of the gatehouse corridor from the front of the gate at the entrance to the end of the inner porch was 87 ½ feet. [16]The guard alcoves and their piers had latticed windows on the inside of the gatehouse all around. The porch had them too. There were windows all around inside. On each pier were decorative palm trees.

[17]Then he brought me [through the gatehouse] to the [temple compound's] outer courtyard, and look, [worshipers'] chambers and a paved walkway made for the courtyard all around: thirty chambers [along the compound's outer wall, lining the courtyard,] opening onto the walkway. [18]The walkway abutted the sides of the gatehouses and its width matched their length. This was the Lower Walkway. [19]Then he measured the distance [across the compound's outer courtyard] from the front of the lower gatehouse to the perimeter of the inner courtyard, 175 feet. He then moved from the east gateway to the north side of the compound.

[20]Here was the north gatehouse of the outer temple courtyard. He measured its depth and width. [21]Its guard alcoves, three on each side, and its piers, and porch had the same measurements as the first gate; the gateway was 87 ½ feet long and 43 ¾ feet wide. [22]Its windows, porch, and palm tree decorations had the same measurements as those of the gate tower facing east. Seven steps led up to it, and its porch was on the courtyard's inside. [23]Like the east gatehouse, the northern one lay opposite a gatehouse of the inner court; he measured the distance from gate tower to gate tower at 175 feet.

[24]Then he took me to the south side of the compound, and look: a south gatehouse. He measured its piers and porch; they had the same dimensions as the others. [25]The gate tower and its porch had windows all around, like those previously mentioned. [Like the other gateways,] it was 87 ½ feet long and 43 ¾ feet wide. [26]There were seven steps leading up to it, and its entry porch/narthex was on the courtyard's inside. [The porch] had decorative palm trees on its pilasters, one on either side. [27][Opposite the southern outer gateway,] the inner courtyard likewise had a gatehouse facing south. Here on the south side, too, he measured the distance from gateway to gateway at 175 feet.

Notes

40:1. *In the twenty-fifth year.* This is the final occurrence of thirteen chronological formulas in Ezekiel's book, which Mayfield (2010, 11, 94, 100, 121) shows divide the prophecy into macro-level units. Chapters 40–48 thus join together to create a major literary unit in the book. The unit is unique in the book, however, in that it contains no prophetic word formulas subdividing it (cf. Note *Word . . . happened to me* on 38:1).

The tenth of the month. In the traditional rabbinic view (b. ʿArak. 12a) this would be 10 Tishri (probably September) 573, which is Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement; see Lev 23:26–32, Num 29:7–11). Tishri (the "seventh month" in the Bible's liturgical calendar; see texts such as Lev 23:27) is the autumnal (September/October) "beginning of the year" in Israel's older agricultural calendar. Most modern commentators, however, apparently along with the LXX (which refers here to a numbered month, "the first month," rather than the year's "beginning"), understand Ezekiel to refer to Nisan, rather than Tishri. Nisan (Nisanu in Akkadian) is the first month of the year in the Babylonian calendar and in the Bible's liturgical calendar. Ezekiel 45:18 has the utopian liturgical year start in Nisan (see Note *[Early spring]* on 45:18). Called Abib in preexilic times, this month fell in March/April. The date here would then be in late April 573 BCE, the exact time when Babylonian ceremony each year enthroned Marduk in the *akitu* temple on the tenth day of the first month (Halpern 1981, 54; Stevenson 1996, 52; Joyce 2007a, 222).

Struck down. The Hebrew root appears in the *hophal* stem elsewhere in Ezekiel only in 33:21, when Ezekiel first heard of Jerusalem's fall. The diction deemphasizes the role of earthly, political forces in Jerusalem's destruction, suggesting instead the idea of divine sovereignty and causality.

That very day. The same expression occurs in Ezek 24:2, where Ezekiel records God's supernatural revelation of the exact date Babylonia laid siege to Jerusalem. Both there and here (whether the month is Tishri or Nisan), the language signals that only God, no other force, is sovereign over Zion's fate. God, not any political power, not Marduk, decreed the temple's destruction, and only God can set and reveal the terms of its restoration. Those terms, of course, are now about to be detailed at length.

Hand of the Lord. The formulaic phrase about seizure by the Lord's hand signifies otherworldly translation (divine transportation) of the prophet's body or, at least, of his consciousness. The formula introduces each of the book's four major vision reports (see 3:14, 22; 8:1; 37:1; also cf. 33:22).

40:2. *Divine visions.* Reference to such "visions" occurs in the introduction of other vision reports of the prophet (see 1:1 and 8:3). Again, the text signals readers that they are about to be treated to major insights into God's perspective on terrestrial matters. Readers should seriously hesitate before applying normal categories of time and space to the vision's objects. The prophet's earlier visions have *not* related linear history and empirical facts. Rather, readers have seen his visionary gaze peer beyond observable reality to perceive *transhistorical* structures and truths. Thus, in chapters 1–3 Ezekiel experienced a sort of "parallel universe," encountering God's bodily Presence in Babylonia when it cannot yet have left Jerusalem (see 11:23).

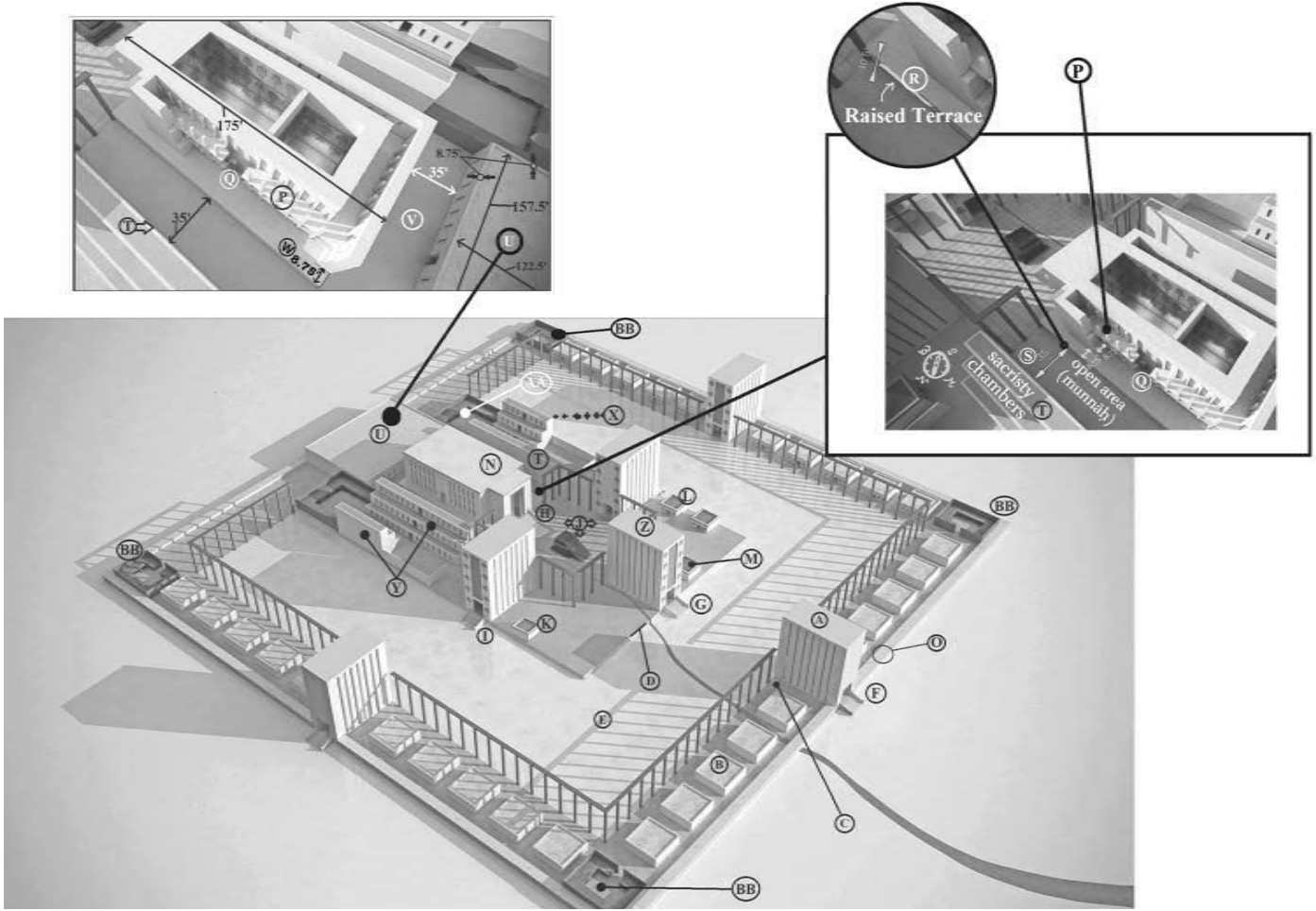
40:3. *Like bronze.* The supernatural guide introduced here leads Ezekiel on his tour of the temple complex. He is a being like the "man clothed in linen" introduced in Ezek 9:2. Zechariah, a Zadokite prophet like Ezekiel, will later speak of a similar figure holding a measuring line (Zech 2:5–9). The bronze appearance of Ezekiel's guide signals his transcendent nature (cf. Dan 10:5–6). Zechariah will later envision the portal to the Beyond, through which fly God's chariots, as "mountains of bronze" (Zech 6:1). So too, Ezekiel's four cherubim gleamed like polished bronze in the sun (1:7; see Rashi and Radak). On the basis of the phrasing of 1:7, the LXX *Vorlage* of 40:2 (echoed in Dan 10:6) expanded the text to read "gleaming bronze." See Mackie 2015, 131–32.

Cord . . . stick. The guide has two implements: the measuring cord for long distances and the measuring stick for shorter, room- or foundation-sized ones (see Radak). In one of his building inscriptions, Babylonian king Nabopolassar I speaks of measuring the foundation of the ziggurat of Babylon with a "measuring reed" (Carvalho 1992, 103). The cord and stick as paired implements appear in several ancient Near Eastern images associated with royal investiture and temple building. This is significant, since Ezekiel's vision aims to directly challenge common ancient understandings about temples and how they legitimate human monarchs. Ezekiel's vision specifically lacks a standard monarch and describes a massive temple built solely by God, who thereby claims sovereign cosmic rule (see Stevenson 1996, 116). An excellent example of the cord and stick appears in the investiture scene from the Ur-Nammu Stela, from about 2100 BCE (see Image: https://goo.gl/sRcn8K). In the scene, the deity holds out to the king two objects with his right hand. (The king is better seen in the image in Bodi [2009, 490], where he pours out a libation to Nanna.) One object, which at first looks like a staff, is a measuring stick. The second object, which appears to be a solid ring, on closer inspection is a coiled and looped rope. Both objects helped builders create straight and precise foundations, and in the hands of the king they symbolized true and righteous leadership. Ur's king will be able to build a fine temple. The symbols perdured across cultures for well over a thousand years, eventually becoming simplified and stylized as a rod and ring, symbols well known to students of ancient iconography. They appear thus in the Hammurabi stela, where they correlate with the king's self-presentation as "the just king." Bradshaw and Head (2013, 39) write, "As emblems that symbolically conjoin the acts of measurement and temple foundation-laying with the processes of cosmic creation, the Mesopotamian rod and ring can be profitably compared to temple surveying instruments in the biblical book of Ezekiel."

40:4. *All that you are about to see.* Ezekiel borrows the diction here word for word from HS at Exod 25:9 (see Evans 2006, 196). Unlike in Exodus, however, Ezekiel records no instruction to build. His temple represents utopian instruction and critique but is not for human construction. (On Exod 25:9, see further Note *Perfection* on 43:10.)

House of Israel. The phrase is characteristic of HS style (e.g., Exod 16:31, 40:38; Lev 10:6, 17:3; see Knohl 1995, 110). Most recently, it occurred five times in Ezekiel 39.

40:5. *Measuring standard.* Paraphrase is required here to clarify the cryptic Hebrew, in which Ezekiel specifies that he is speaking of the Hebrew "long cubit" (about 21 inches), which was longer than a cubit (about 18 inches) by a handbreadth (about 3 inches). If the supernatural guide's measuring stick was 6 long cubits of 21 inches each, its total length would be 10 ½ feet. How confident can we be in these numbers? Reassuringly, a wooden Egyptian cubit rod on display in the British Museum (no. EA23078; the image is searchable online) is, in fact, about 20 ⅔ inches long. So too, excavated tombs and buildings in Egypt, Israel, and elsewhere have clearly been laid out according to this standard. Note that for purposes of this commentary's translation, I have rounded the length of this "long" or Egyptian "royal" cubit to 21 inches, and all modern values given in this commentary must be understood as approximate. For discussion and bibliography, see García Martínez (1992, 191), Ritmeyer (2006, 170–73), Stevenson (1996, 115 n. 19), and Bodi (2009, 491). Ezekiel's guide measures the outer wall of the temple complex using his 10 ½-foot stick, and the reader discovers its impressive dimensions (fig. 2, location O).


175'
8.75'
35'
157.5'
35'
122.5'
Raised Terrace
sacristy chambers
open area (munnah)
P
Q
R
S
T
U
V
BB

Handbreadth. Ezekiel takes up the term *ṭōpaḥ* (handbreadth), which occurs also in 40:43 and 43:13, from priestly texts in Exod 25:25 (PT) and 37:12 (HS). It does not occur elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (see Levitt Kohn 2002, 54).

40:6. *East gatehouse.* The temple compound's outer gate towers were massive and complex, and Ezekiel's guide now begins measuring the many sections, compartments, and components of the eastern one (see fig. 2, location A).

Front steps. The reader soon learns that there are seven outer steps up to the gatehouse (see vv. 22, 26). The LXX adds the fact here (see O'Hare 2010, 76). (See Image: https://goo.gl/LQ7LGZ.) The steps lead up to the floor level of the gate tower as well as that of the temple compound's entire outer courtyard. This presupposes that the complex sat atop a terrace platform. This parallels the terrace of the ʿAin Dara temple, an early first-millennium BCE neo-Hittite shrine, located about 42 miles northwest of Aleppo in Syria. The terrace, which created a foundation platform at the top of the tell's acropolis, was lined with reliefs (Monson 1999, 17; 2000, 24). Ezekiel's terrace is immense compared with that of ʿAin Dara: about 766,000 square feet (thirteen football fields).

[Foyer area.] See the bottom area labeled *T* in figure 3. The bracketed clarification in the translation is added to help the reader start getting a picture of the gate tower. Most of the gatehouse extends back behind the foyer area spanning the depth of the compound wall, thus penetrating into the temple courtyard.

Deep [front to back]. Other measurements of the gatehouse given later in the chapter (see vv. 9, 11) show that *rōḥab,* which lexicons often define as "width/breadth," here refers to threshold *depth* (NJB, ESV, NIV, NJPS). It cannot mean side-to-side (i.e., north-to-south) width (as in NABR, CEB, NASB). Ezekiel's conventions on describing length and width are sometimes confusing to us. The term *rōḥab* can indicate a distance from an outer surface inward, as it does here. Note how in v. 11 the guide makes two north-south, "width," measurements and refers to the first as *rōḥab* and the second as *ʾōrek* (BDB and *HALOT:* "length")! No wonder NABR, ESV, NIV, and CEB all misunderstand the verse. Even Rashi could get turned around. Commenting on 40:11, he argues that *ʾōrek* is always used for the biggest dimension of an object or area, but that cannot be the case here. This commentary translates Ezekiel's terms into language that most modern readers will find natural.

Figure 2. Three-dimensional model of the utopian temple. Permission to reprint granted by Bibliaprints.com. Key: A = Outer east gatehouse, B = Worshipers' chambers, C = Lower walkway, D = Priestly platform perimeter, E = Outer courtyard, F = Outer east gatehouse stairs, G = Inner east gatehouse stairs, H = Temple building stairs, I = Inner south gatehouse stairs, J = Square altar yard, K = South priestly service chamber, L = North priestly service chamber, M = East priestly service chamber (MT), N = Temple building, O = Outer wall, P = Temple annex of side chambers, Q = Winding ramp, R = Raised terrace of temple building, S = Open area near temple building, T = North sacristy chambers, U = Large west building, V = Open area behind temple building, W = Temple building outer walkway, X = Vantage point for viewing north sacristy chambers, Y = South sacristy complex, Z = Inner east gatehouse, AA = Priests' kitchen, BB = People's kitchens.

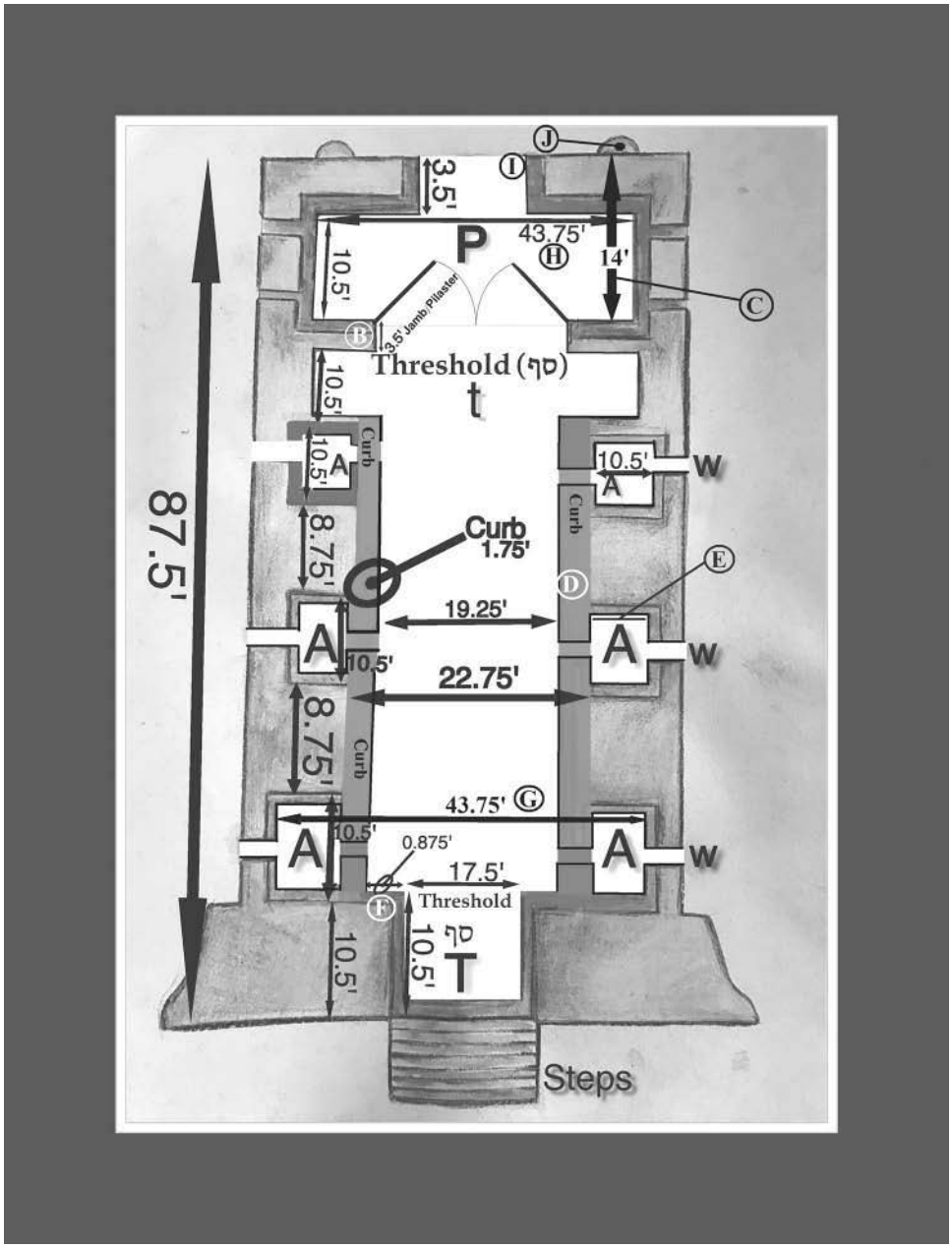


Figure 3. Utopian temple gatehouse plan, compound perimeter. Drawing by Margaret Wohler. Key: A = Guard alcoves, B = Jamb/pilaster, C = Length of porch (including the entrance), D = Protruding curb, E = Alcove sidewall, F = Additional corridor width, G = Full width of gatehouse, H = Porch width, I = Jamb posts at porch's entrance, J = Outer pilasters, P = Porch (narthex), T = Foyer area, t = Inner threshold area, w = Windows.

The MT adds six Hebrew words to the end of v. 6: "The one threshold area was ten and a half feet deep" (see NJPS, CEB, NASB). Although probably a result of dittography, and thus left untranslated here, this MT canonical form of the text is perhaps intelligible. One can read it as emphasizing the massive size of the gatehouse, whose mere threshold was more than 10 feet long (see NJPS). Alternatively, the text possibly refers to a second area deeper inside the gate (v. 7), which is of the same depth and is also termed a "threshold" (see NASB: "the other threshold"). See the upper area labeled *t* (lowercase) in figure 3.

40:7. *[Three guard alcoves.]* The bracketed sentence is added for clarification (cf. NLT), since the modern reader needs this information for understanding before it actually appears in v. 10. That the alcoves housed guards is not explicitly stated, but, extrapolating from 1 Kgs 14:28, this seems the likeliest explanation for their existence.

Each alcove. The six square alcoves are the side chambers labeled *A* in figure 3. That they are square, and come in sets of three, is significant, since square shapes are highly symbolic in the utopian temple (cf. 40:47, 41:4, 43:16, 48:20). More will be said on this later, especially when we see the three great square areas arranged along the central east-west "spine" of the complex, up on the raised priestly inner court (see Note *Yard* on 40:47). The point for now is that as the reader moves with Ezekiel and his guide through the gate tower, there are intimations of approaching great holiness hidden in plain sight. Given the seriousness about measuring in Ezekiel 40–48, clarity about measuring terminology is appropriate: "10 ½ feet square" refers to a square that is 10 ½ feet on a side, one with an area of 110 ¼ square feet.

[Along the corridor's walls.] The Targum inserts a reference to the corridor "wall," which, though unlikely to be an early part of the text, is helpfully clarifying of the sense (as Rashi observes). The distance in question, 8 ¾ feet, runs east to west along the gatehouse walkway, not across it (i.e., this is *not* the north-south distance between facing alcoves). The CEB's measurement of 7 ½ feet is an error, apparently reverting to an 18-inch cubit, rather than Ezekiel's long cubit of 21 inches. In fact, the CEB's measurement figures are idiosyncratic throughout the utopian vision.

Threshold area. The Hebrew term is the same as that used in v. 6 for the *outer* threshold leading into the gatehouse. Verse 7 now reuses the term to describe an *inner* threshold leading to the gate's final area, its porch, or narthex, beyond which lies the inside of the temple compound (see the upper area labeled *t* in fig. 3). Note that there may have been a door and a wide jamb-post, 3 ½ feet thick, between the inner threshold and the porch/narthex (see fig. 3, location B). The reason for positing this reconstruction appears below in the notes to v. 9.

Porch [or narthex.] The architectural space at the end of the gateway corridor, oriented toward the inside of the temple compound, here termed "entry porch/narthex," is rendered by other English translations simply as "vestibule" (NABR, NJPS, NRSV) or "porch" (NET, CEB, NJB). The BBE describes it plainly and simply as "the covered way of the doorway inside." (See the area labeled *P* in fig. 3.) Because there were windows in the porch (see vv. 16, 25), some presumably opening to the outside, it cannot have been a completely open "portico" (NIV) but must have at least had sidewalls.

40:8. *10 ½ feet deep.* The "one cubit" of the NRSV must be a translation error, since the text refers not to a cubit but to the guide's "measuring stick," which was

10 ½ feet long. All or some of v. 8, especially the measurement of 10 ½ feet, is omitted by several modern translations, including NABR, NIV, NJB, and NLT, but the LXX supports the MT, reading "equal to the reed in length." For analysis, see the following note.

40:9. *[Full, inclusive length.]* Verses 8 and 9 at first appear to give two different measures of the entry porch/narthex, which confused the translators of the ancient versions, who mostly omitted v. 8 (except for the Targum; the LXX seems to take the measurement in the verse as referring to a guard alcove). In the present canonical form of the text, we may understand v. 8 to give the *inside* length of the porch and v. 9 to represent a figure that includes the thickness of the wall with its jamb-posts at the entrance of the porch. If these are 3 ½ feet in length (v. 9), then together with the porch's inner length of 10 ½ feet (v. 8), we have the 14 feet of v. 9 (see fig. 3, location C). If this reasoning is correct, and the 3 ½-foot width of the jamb-posts is thus part of the 14-foot porch dimension of v. 9, then we need to find an additional 3 ½-foot span of gateway depth earlier in the corridor to arrive at the full corridor length of 87 ½ feet given in v. 15. As mentioned above, there might well be a jamb-post of this span between the second, inner threshold and the porch/narthex area (see fig. 3, location B). Alternatively, this span could constitute the thickness of the pilasters back at the start of the corridor, at the top of the gatehouse's outer steps.

14 feet deep. In my reconstruction, this is the combined west-east length, 3 ½ feet + 10 ½ feet, at the top of the temple gatehouse plan (see fig. 3, location C). The text actually does not specify whether the 14 feet represents the area's (east-west) depth (NIV) or (north-south) width (NLT: "across"), but the latter interpretation would not allow the porch's sidewalls sufficient proximity to the outside to have windows (vv. 16, 25). The LXX of v. 14 leads some interpreters to take the width of the porch to be 35 feet (consult Note *Height of the porch's pilasters* on 40:14), but this is still too narrow (Ezek 40:30 specifies the width of the porch as 43 ¾ feet). The "twelve feet" of the CEB must again be a translation error, reverting to an 18-inch cubit as in v. 7.

Jamb-posts. These massive jamb-posts, like those that will appear in the porch of the temple building proper (Ezek 40:48–49), constitute the great frame of the entranceway of the gate tower's porch (see fig. 3, location I). Alternatively, as in the NRSV, they are "pilasters" protruding from the western face of the entranceway (a pilaster is a column-shaped protuberance from a wall; see fig. 3, location J). Note that if one does think of pilasters, as does the NRSV, then these must be distinguished from actual cylindrical *columns,* such as those on the temple house's porch (Ezek 40:49; cf. 1 Kgs 7:21). The prominent jambs/pilasters of the gatehouse porches do, nevertheless, mirror the two huge columns in the porch of the temple building proper. This is easy to see in Ted Larson's representation (see Image: https://goo.gl/NhUfeo), although the actual columns that Ezekiel envisioned were likely load-bearing, not freestanding (see Note *Column on each side* on 40:49).

40:10. *Piers.* The structure and decoration of the *ʾêlîm* lying between the guardrooms is elusive. Is the text about wall space, arching supports, pilasters, or even all three? The Hebrew term at issue, *ʾayil,* is the same word understood as a "jamb" or "pilaster" in the preceding verse. It is not easy to imagine curving pilasters shaped to accommodate both window slots and palm tree decorations (v. 16), so we probably

should think of wall space instead—space between alcove entrances that may be embellished with pilasters as well as with the windows and palm tree decorations of v. 16. The pilasters, if present and projecting from the walls, may have simulated the appearance of columns (cf. VOICE). The palm trees and window slots may have sat on, in, or around the simulated pillars. The windows of v. 16, if located on this plane, may be faux (see Note *Windows* on 40:16). As an alternative reconstruction, consider that, viewed from the side (that is, from inside the guardrooms), the alcoves' projecting walls constitute partitions (note the NLT translation: "the dividing walls separating them"). The windows and/or tree decorations of v. 16 may lie on the faces of these partitions; that is, they may lie on the alcoves' sidewalls, on a plane perpendicular to the corridor (see fig. 3, location E). If the windows of v. 16 are on these walls, then they must be faux or open into other guard alcoves, not to the outside.

40:11. *17 ½ feet wide at the initial opening.* In the initial threshold area at the gate's east end, where the gateway traversed the compound wall, the width of the passageway is 17 ½ feet (see the area labeled *T* in fig. 3).

22 ¾ feet wide in the corridor. On my understanding that "width" is meant here by *ʾōrek,* see the discussion in Note *Deep [front to back]* on 40:6 (contrast NABR, NIV, CEB). The corridor becomes wider, 22 ¾ feet, as one leaves the threshold and passes between the guard alcoves. A 22 ¾-foot corridor width fits measurement figures elsewhere in the passage as follows: 22 ¾ = 43 ¾ (entire gateway width, v. 13) – 10 ½ × 2 (guard alcove width, the front of each flush with the corridor wall, v. 7). The alcoves' front walls are flush with the corridor wall, but v. 12 will inform us that they have a protruding curb extending out into the hallway 1 ¾ feet on each side. The actual walkway space of the corridor between the guardrooms is thus only 19 ¼ feet.

40:12. *[Protruding] curb.* Some type of curb or raised surface ran along in front of the six guard alcoves. It functioned as a barrier (*gĕbûl*), extending the working space of the sentries 1 ¾ feet out into the corridor on both sides of the hallway, providing them just enough space to come out into the gatehouse passageway, look right and left, and observe those passing through the gatehouse (see fig. 3, location D). In the areas where the barriers/curbs take up extra space, the corridor width effectively narrows to 19 ¼ feet.

Note that the curbs do not protrude far enough into the corridor to be flush with the threshold's sidewalls at the gatehouse opening. Even in its narrow "working width" (19 ¼ feet), the corridor remains wider than the entry threshold by 0.875 feet on each side (see fig. 3, location F). The arithmetic is as follows: 43 ¾ (entire gateway width, v. 13; cf. v. 30) = 17 ½ (threshold foyer width, v. 11) + 10 ½ × 2 (guard alcove width, v. 7) + 1 ¾ × 2 (barrier/curb width, v. 12) + 0.875 × 2 (additional recess width on each side).

40:13. *Outer ceiling edge.* Because the reference to measuring from "roofs" in the MT appears odd, several modern translations (NRSV, NABR, NLT) follow the LXX here: "He measured the gate from the [rear] wall of one chamber to the [rear] wall of the other chamber." Reference to roofs (the *lectio difficilior*), however, is intelligible, assuming that the guide wanted a direct measurement across the gateway unimpeded by the curbs or other barriers that were down at floor level. Thus, he measured from "the outer [i.e., rear] ceiling edge of one room to the outer ceiling edge of the other,"

"through the [guard] room openings" (CEB; also see Rashi). We will learn in v. 30 that the porch/narthex of the gatehouses has this same width, 43 ¾ feet. (See Note *14 feet deep* on 40:9 and fig. 3, locations G and H.)

Through the alcove doorways. At the end of v. 13 the MT simply has the cryptic phrase "door facing door." The measurement given of 43 ¾ feet (25 cubits) is much larger than the 22 ¾-foot distance from "door to door," so the idea can only be that the line of measurement of the full width of the gatehouse extended "through the [alcove] openings facing each other" (NABR). The NJPS does a very good job with the Hebrew here: "Their [the alcoves'] openings faced each other directly across the gate passage, so that when he measured from rear of recess to rear of recess he obtained a width of 25 cubits."

40:14. *Height of the porch's pilasters.* Ezekiel's text is especially challenging here. Certain architectural entities are again assigned a measurement, but are they sidewalls, jambs, or pilasters, and which ones? If the MT is correct, the reference is to the height of the porch's pilasters or, perhaps, to the height of the piers of the gatehouse's inner hallway, the ones between the guardroom alcoves. In either case, the reader is given an indication of the startling height of the gate tower. If inner piers are at issue (NIV, CEB, NASB), we learn that the height of the entire gatehouse structure is 105 feet. If the pilasters on the face of the outer porch are the focus (REB note), we learn the gateway's height at its tallest extreme, at its impressive porch, is 105 feet (see the towering gatehouse porches drawn by Charles Chipiez and by Ted Larson, Image: https://goo.gl/mvMVq9). Ritmeyer (2006, 293) observes that it is architecturally pleasing for a porch to be higher than the building to which it is attached. Supposing a reference to the porch's height more intelligible than a reference to its pilasters' height alone, some translators and commentators emend *ʾêlîm* (pilasters) to *ʾûlām* (porch), a simple change of *yod* to *vav* (NJPS, NET, Milgrom 2012, 68–69 n. 96). The meaning of the text is essentially the same with the emendation, however. Since the pilasters would extend to about the height of the porch, giving the height of the pilasters gives the approximate height of the porch (see Image: https://goo.gl/vcVooD). My translation, "porch's pilasters," gives a respectful "nod" toward the emendation without embracing it. Note that the measure of 105 feet can represent only height, not length or width, since the gatehouse as a whole building is only 43 ¾ feet wide and 87 ½ feet long. None of the gate tower's components can exceed these dimensions. (Could the figure represent a measure of a perimeter, as the CEB has it? No, a figure of 105 feet is too small for a rendering such as that in the CEB to work.) Supporting the idea that height is in mind, the guide "makes out" the colossal expanse of 105 feet instead of "measuring" it (Keil 1876b, 195)—he is not about to sprout wings and take flight with his measuring stick! (The Targum's verb, *ʿbd,* supports the MT here.) Since, then, the MT reading clearly refers to height (also the readings of the Targum and Vulgate), this verse gives us one of our few explicit indications of vertical dimension within the temple complex (see also vv. 5, 42; 41:8, 22; 43:13), and the measure is breathtaking. The gate tower is 105 feet tall (60 cubits), about ten stories. Passing by these colossal pilasters, readers continue to feel themselves departing their common, profane world and entering a more holy realm—the towering paradise of God's presence. Pilasters generally resemble towering trees, and these are specifically decorated as palms (see Note *Palm trees* on 40:26). Thus, the reader is invited to experience inklings of the forest realm of Eden (see Comments). Some who find a porch of such colossal height incredible in the present context

reconstruct instead a reference to the inner width of the porch. They generally put it at 35 feet (20 cubits) (NRSV, NJB, ESV, REB, GNT, CEV). Perhaps they draw the number from the LXX version of the verse. Milgrom (2012, 69 n. 97) claims to do so. As noted, however, the actual width of the porch is 43 ¾ feet (v. 30) and the length is 14 feet (v. 9). In his figure 9, Milgrom (2012, 70) accepts this width, despite what he says in his earlier footnote. In terms of cubits, 43 ¾ feet is Ezekiel's central symbolic number: 25 cubits. What *is* 35 feet wide (20 cubits) is, according to 40:49, the porch of the *temple building* up in the inner courtyard. In any case, the number "twenty" in the LXX seems originally not to have been a linear measurement at all but an enumeration of supposed additional chambers or cells circling the gatehouses. Thus, the NETS translation renders the verse: "And the atrium of the [porch] of the gate was sixty cubits [105 feet high]; the gate had twenty [niches] all around."

Gatehouse perimeter. The final section of v. 14 refers to what goes "all around the gatehouse." Although the reference is not entirely clear, the language does reflect how the bulk of the gatehouse protrudes beyond the compound's outer wall into the temple's outer courtyard (on the wall's relative thinness, see fig. 2, location O). The outer courtyard is effectively "all around" the gate. As the REB nicely puts it, "The gateway on every side projected into the court." I follow Keil (1876b, 187, 196) in taking the singular noun *ʾayil* (pilaster) as collective and in understanding the outer court of the temple to "reach," or abut, the gatehouse at this forward, western point—that is, to encompass its perimeter here at its outer edge where its pilasters define its farthest reach.

40:16. *Windows.* The exact meaning of the Hebrew describing the windows is unclear. Frequently mentioned possibilities are that they are latticed ("trellised"), framed, narrowed, and/or shuttered. For detailed discussion, see García Martínez 1992, 198 n. 57, and Block 1998, 522 n. 41. A relief at the Iron Age ʿAin Dara temple northwest of Aleppo, Syria, depicts a framed lattice window, so my translation "latticed" is a live possibility (see Monson 2000, 32; Image: https://goo.gl/CbKWqZ; note the lattices in the shape of figure-eight ribbons). Ornate window frames are entirely possible in Ezekiel's temple, as illustrated by the "Woman in a Window" ivory relief from Arslan Tash, Syria (see Image: https://goo.gl/8pEB29; *ANEP,* no. 131; Monson 2000, 33). The tiered, recessed frames of this exemplar would work well for the gatehouse's thick walls, and they would certainly fit the tiered symbolism found elsewhere in Ezekiel's temple. Perhaps some of the windows, particularly the ones on the piers between alcoves, are closed niches. The ʿAin Dara window is faux—merely an imitation window—so again, this is a live possibility. Radak spoke of "closed niches." Block (1998, 523), drawing on phraseology in the Qumran Temple Scroll (190–104 BCE), argues that the "windows" of 40:16 are actually niches for storing the guards' equipment. Against Block, the majority of the windows cannot be niches, if the gatehouse mirrors the prized Assyrian building type known as the *bīt ḫilāni,* as is likely (see Bodi 2009, 491–93). A key feature of *bīt ḫilāni* style was beautiful windows. The Peshitta glosses our verse to interpret the windows as arrow slits (arrow loops), which splayed outward on the inside as embrasures (cf. the Vulgate and the Targum's treatment of 1 Kgs 6:4). If Ezekiel's windows are arrow slits, they predate Archimedes's use of such apertures during the siege of Syracuse in 214–212 BCE, often considered their first appearance. On the possible locations of Ezekiel's windows, see Note *Piers* on 40:10.

The porch. There is only one inner porch, so the Hebrew plural of the MT may refer to the porches of all three gatehouses of the temple compound. In vv. 21 and 22 and several succeeding verses, I follow the *ketib* and read "porch." For additional discussion, see Note *Porch* on 40:21.

Palm trees. The tree symbolism marks the temple complex as a holy Edenic realm, the delightful, archetypal garden where God first dwelled with humanity (Gen 2: 8–9). Ezekiel thinks of Eden as a colossal orchard, with towering trees of mythological proportions (31:8). Later, 40:26 speaks of palm decorations on the pilasters of the gatehouse's entry porch. Here, the palm decorations are probably on the fronts of the piers, facing into the corridor. It is also possible, however, that the trees are on the sides of the piers, that is, on their lateral faces as they function as partitions between the guard alcoves (see fig. 3, location E). This lateral position is worth considering, since it would leave more room for windows on the front, corridor-facing, sides of the piers (see Note *Piers* on 40:10).

40:17. *[Worshipers'] chambers.* The thirty chambers were for the general use of worshipers (consult Jer 35:2–4, Neh 13:4–14), especially as areas for eating sacrificial meals with friends and family (see fig. 2, location B). They were likely distributed along the compound's south, east, and north perimeters, ten to a side. Alternatively, Block (1998, 508, fig. 1) places six of the thirty chambers along the compound's rear, west perimeter. This is also feasible.

40:18. *Lower Walkway.* The paved area around the chambers (see fig. 2, location C) is designated as the "Lower Walkway" to distinguish it from the corridors and pathways of the temple compound's priestly inner courtyard, which was higher in elevation (e.g., see 42:3). As figure 2 shows, the walkway's pavement surrounds the worshipers' chambers on all sides and extends out from the compound perimeter wall the full length of the compound gate towers.

40:19. *Inner courtyard.* According to the Hebrew, the distance measured across the outer courtyard is not to the front of the inner *gate* (NJPS, NABR, NLT; cf. the wording of vv. 23, 27), but to the inner *courtyard* (CEB, NJB, NIV, ESV), that is, up to the inner court's perimeter, which encompasses all three of the compound's inner gatehouses exclusive of their outer stairs (see fig. 2, location D, and Carley 1974, 271, fig. 3). As figure 2 and Carley show, the measurement of 175 feet fits perfectly with measurements elsewhere in the utopian vision. The wording is significant, since commentators frequently fail to understand that the area of the inner courtyard extends out this far (e.g., Keil 1876b, 352–53, plate I; Stevenson 1996, 29, fig. 3; Block 1998, 508, fig. 1; Milgrom 2012, 42, fig. 1). Since it does so extend, this makes for a much more extensive raised priestly courtyard than is often imagined. In particular, there is room for the priestly chambers to be introduced in Ezek 40:44. The reader learns from the measurement here that the outer court is huge (fig. 2, location E), forming a substantial "buffer zone" protecting the holiness of the inner court and especially of the temple building within it. The laity can proceed no farther into the temple complex than into the large outer court. Indeed, most pilgrim visitors to the complex are allowed only a brief trek through the courtyard, with no loitering (46:9).

He then moved. At the end of the verse, the Hebrew cryptically adds "the east and the north." My rendering takes its cue from the LXX, "One hundred cubits was the distance at the east gateway; and he brought me to the north" (cf. NJPS, NABR, CEB).

Some translations (NET, NJB) understand the final phrase differently, as continuing to refer to the measuring of the outer courtyard (but then why omit the southern measurement?). The NRSV omits the final MT phrase altogether.

40:21. *Porch.* Since the gatehouse has only one porch/vestibule, I read the singular with the *ketib* both here and in several succeeding verses (see Note *The porch* on 40:16). Almost all modern English translations also read the singular (but contrast NASB, BBE). A few translations (KJV, NKJV) read "arches"/"archways" (plural) instead of "porch." Perhaps they are confused by the spelling of "porch" as *ʾêlām,* a variant form of *ʾûlām* that looks very much (apart from the possessive suffix) like the plural of *ʾayil* (jamb, sidewall). Interestingly, this plural form of "porch" found in the *qere* of 40:21 appears only in Ezekiel 40–41 within the Hebrew Bible.

First gate. The LXX specifies the identity of the gate at issue differently than does the MT ("first gate"), describing it as "the gate that looks eastward" (cf. NLT; Ezek 40:6, 42:15, 43:1). O'Hare (2010, 78) thinks it likely that both the MT and LXX have glossed in different ways an earlier text that referred simply to "the gate."

43 ¾ feet wide. As in v. 13, the measurement of width is not simply of the gateway corridor but of the entire distance across the gate tower, that is, "between the back walls of facing guard alcoves" (NLT).

40:22. *Windows, porch.* The MT at the start of the verse is unusual and perhaps should be emended to "its [main] windows and *the windows of* its porch." It would then mirror the diction in vv. 25, 29, and 33 (see *BHS* critical apparatus, NJPS, BBE). Note, however, that despite the marked symmetry of the gate towers, Ezekiel's descriptions of them vary a good deal in both terminology and syntax.

On the courtyard's inside. I follow the LXX reading, "its porch was within [the courtyard]," since the steps are on the gatehouse's outside and do not lead up to the porch (as a literal reading of the MT might suggest; cf. NET, NASB, KJV). Perhaps the MT has the sense that the porch/narthex lies "opposite them [i.e., the stairs]" (NIV) or "ahead of them [i.e., ahead of the stairs]" (NJPS; see Rashi and Radak: "Before he would enter the hall, he would ascend the steps"). Verse 26 below has the same language.

40:26. *Inside.* See the immediately preceding Note *On the courtyard's inside* on v. 22.

Palm trees. As a new observation, not noted about the east and north gatehouses, the text here describes the south gate tower as having two palm-tree decorations flanking the entrance to the porch. The palm trees mentioned in vv. 16 and 22 seem to be on the piers inside the gatehouse dividing the alcoves, while the Hebrew syntax here (and echoed in 40:34, 37) indicates that these trees pertain specifically to the porch and constitute a unique pair exhibiting bilateral symmetry (MT: "one here and one there"; also LXX, contrast NIV, NLT). The Vulgate rightly states that they are out at the front of the porch. Presumably, all three gate towers had the twin external trees, which are observed only here. The trees decorated the porch's front pilasters, or these pilasters were actually shaped to look like palm trees. Rashi (commenting on 40:9) imagines them as "round trees made of hewn stone." The REB describes the trees as "carved on each pilaster" (see the Image referenced in Note *Height of the porch's pilasters* on 40:14 [see Appendix]). That we are dealing with pilasters, rather than jamb-posts, seems confirmed by the use of the term *ʾayil* specifically for pilasters out at the front of the porch in 40:49 (see

Note *Pilasters* on 40:49). It would also increase the similarity of the gatehouse to the Assyrian building type known as the *bīt ḫilāni,* mentioned above, whose porch roof was usually supported by two columns (Monson 1999, 12, 17; Bodi 2009, 492–93). Our palms would also beautifully mirror the palm-tree ornaments atop the steps of the inner gatehouses (vv. 31, 34, 37), which they faced across the outer courtyard. Ezekiel 40:37 is quite specific that these palm trees faced the outer courtyard (see Note *Pilasters* on 40:37).

40:27. *Gatehouse facing south.* A south gateway to the temple's raised inner courtyard stands opposite the south outer-court gateway, just as v. 23 spoke of a north gateway to the inner courtyard opposite the north outer-court gateway. Some translations emend v. 19 so that it likewise speaks of a gateway to the inner courtyard (e.g., NJPS, NABR, NLT; but contrast NRSV, NIV, CEB, NJB).

Comments

A rather fulsome indication of dating begins the final section of Ezekiel's book, the vision of the utopian temple. The awe-inspiring detailed revelation of a utopian shrine and holy land did not occur at a random point. This was a momentous juncture.

It was the twenty-fifth year of the prophet's exile from God's land. As a Zadokite priest devoted to the Scriptures of the Holiness School, Ezekiel would have been well aware that God had ordained that a Jubilee proclamation of liberty should occur every fifty years (Lev 25:8–13 HS). If it was precisely on the Day of Atonement that he received his vision (see Note *The tenth of the month* on 40:1), then some connection with the timing of Jubilee seems undeniable (for this connection, see Lev 25:9 HS). Having survived twenty-five years of exile on this very day, Ezekiel and his kinfolk were in a position to consider and even expect that they were at least halfway toward liberty from Babylonian captivity and restoration to God's land. Surely related to this fact is the manner in which the number twenty-five occurs repeatedly in the measurements of the utopian vision, starting with the 25 cubits (43 ¾ feet) in Ezek 40:13 (Zimmerli 1983, 344; Blenkinsopp 1990, 199). As we shall see, the number is highly symbolic for Ezekiel; there are at least nineteen occurrences of "twenty-five" in Ezekiel 40–48.

In the twenty-fifth year of his exile, Ezekiel would also be fifty years old, since his visions began at the age of thirty in the fifth year after the 597 BCE deportation (1:1–3; Mayfield 2010, 102–3). According to Num 4:3 and 8:23–25 (both HS), this is the age for priests such as Ezekiel to retire. At the age for stepping down from priestly service, Ezekiel is at a moment ripe for glimpsing the ideal goal to which his prophetic toils have pointed. At this very juncture, God grants him a vision of God's model utopia.

If the month in question is in fact Tishri, Ezekiel specifies that he received his vision precisely on the Day of Atonement, the day of the chief priest's deepest penetration within the temple complex (Leviticus 16) (see Tuell 2009, 283). Like a chief priest, he was about to penetrate deep within the utopian temple (but, significantly, not into its inner sanctum, its most holy place). Alternatively, if the month at issue is Nisan (see Note *The tenth of the month* on 40:1), then Ezekiel is about to see the divine Presence entering the utopian temple on the very day when the Babylonians each year celebrated their god Marduk's reoccupation of his *akitu* temple. The prophet thus wit-

nesses the Lord trump Marduk by indwelling his people not just symbolically, as part of a cyclically recurring New Year's rite, but climactically, incontestably, and permanently (43:1–7). Ezekiel 44:1–3 will leave no doubt about the conclusive finality of God's bodily occupation of the utopian temple.

The irrepressible memory of the razing of "the city" (40:1) in Ezekiel's dating of the vision is fraught with feeling. On one hand, one infers a passionate sense of loss that does not allow the prophet even to articulate the city's name, Jerusalem. On the other hand, the generic language likely represents the prophet's continued rejection and rebuke of Jerusalemite royal theology, the naïve assumption of unrestricted royal license and of Zion's ironclad invulnerability.

Ezekiel names neither "Zion" nor "Jerusalem," speaking only of a "city" that had been struck down. The "city" comes up again at the close of the temple vision (Ezekiel 48), forming a literary envelope around our chapters. In Ezekiel's vision of an ideal redemption, the traditionally "royal" city of Jerusalem will *not* regain its former status. No one will even call it "Jerusalem" anymore. Here one cannot help but recall the derogatory renaming of Jerusalem as Hamonah (Crowd Town, Mobville, Turbulent Town) in Ezekiel 39:16.

On this highly symbolic Jubilee and New Year's date, at the point of Ezekiel's readiness for retirement, God's "hand" translates the prophet back to Israel, to a "very high mountain" (40:2; cf. 17:22, 20:40). The mountain in question is not the literal, historical site of the old, razed temple. At about 2,500 feet in altitude, Jerusalem's topography does not fit the imagination of the vision. Rather, this is the archetypal "cosmic mountain" (*Weltberg*) connecting heaven and earth (cf. Ezek 5:5, 17:22, 28:14, 38:12; Zech 14:10). Ezekiel 38:12 speaks of this locale as the center of the earth.

The appearance of the sacred river in Ezekiel 47 will confirm this interpretation (cf. Pss 36:8, 46:4; Isa 33:21; Zech 14:8). So will motifs such as palm trees representing the Eden home of God (Ezek 40:16, 22, 26, 31, 34). All of these tropes, which students of ancient iconography know well, appear in an amazing investiture panel from the royal palace at Mari, the palace of Mari's king, Zimri-Lim (ca. 1778–1758 BCE; fig. 4; also see Stager 2000, 36–38).

Look closely at the bottom center of the Mari panel, noting the sacred rivers, like the one in Ezekiel 47, flowing from the vases in the hands of the fountain goddesses. In each vase, a seedling tree arises, which is the symbolic equivalent of Eden's tree of life (Gen 2:9, Ezek 47:12). Behind each goddess, in the bottom left and right of the panel, under the feet of two flanking bulls, are two mountain symbols (see fig. 4, location A). The images of mountains show that the tree of life and the source of the sacred rivers lie atop God's archetypal cosmic mountain. This is the "very high mountain" of Ezek 40:2. At the same time the "very high mountain" is, in some sense, also Sinai, the mountain of the Torah (cf. Ezek 43:12; consult Levenson 1976, 37–49). Only in two special locales, on Mount Sinai (Exod 24:12 HS) and on Ezekiel's very high mountain (Ezek 43:12), does God hand down a "torah."

What is the city structure (40:2) that Ezekiel sees? Its walls and gates give it "the outline of a city" (NJPS), but the tentative language ("something like a city built on it," NABR) appears to rule out both Jerusalem and any historically literal temple. Is the structure the land's new, unnamed central city (Ezek 48:30–35)? If so, this explains its location on the southern slope of the mountain, supplying a rejoinder to Milgrom's

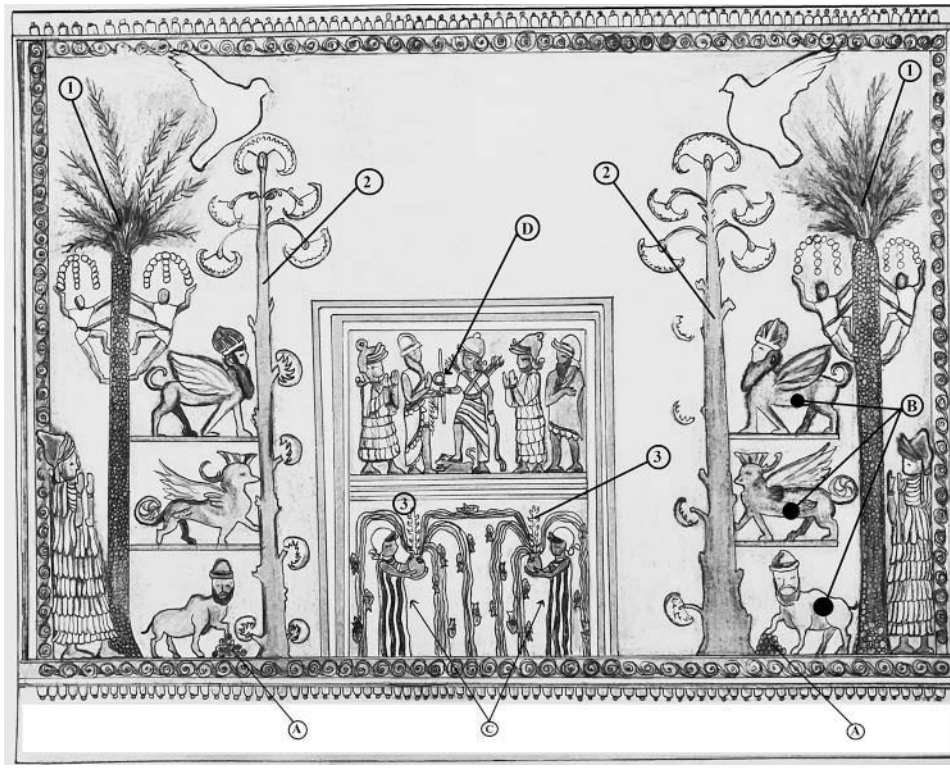


Figure 4. Investiture panel at Mari's royal palace of King Zimri-Lin (a contemporary of the Babylonian king Hammurabi), Syria, 1778–1758 BCE. Present location: Musée du Louvre, Paris. Drawing by Margaret Wohler. Key: A = Cosmic mountain symbols, B = Guardian composite creatures, C = Paired river goddesses, D = Rod and ring symbols, 1 = Guardian palm trees, 2 = Stylized "cosmic" trees, 3 = Seedling trees of life.

view (2012, 45) that Ezekiel thinks here of the Delphi temple's location on the southern slope of Mount Parnassus. And yet, the structure could indeed be Ezekiel's new utopian temple. Carvalho (1992, 136–37) notes that the Qumran Temple Scroll (190–104 BCE) also speaks of the ideal temple as a city. If this is the temple complex, the tentative language gropes to describe something mysteriously new (cf. Ezek 1:28). Here may be an initial clue that the new utopian shrine is metaphysically exalted, a "transfiguration."

I use the language of *transfiguration* because this temple glimpses, but does not yet realize, the final reign of God. It sits not atop the mountain but down its southern slope. Readers learn later that cherubim still guard the entrance to the Most Holy Place (Ezek 41:17–18), which is completely off limits to mortals, including the head priest. What is more, sin and impurity continue to threaten the shrine (45:20), necessitating continuing sacrificial offerings (44:29; 45:17, 22–23). At the start of each year, a special ritual purifying of the temple is now required (45:18–20). Details such as these convey that Ezekiel's temple is something less than a final realization of heaven on earth. Here, I markedly depart from the very different understanding of Milgrom (2012, 43–44).

"Declare all that you are about to see to the House of Israel," God commands in v. 4. Ezekiel enters the model world of the utopian temple as a temporary guest. He will learn its new imagination only for the purpose of bringing it back and conveying it to his audience so that they can change their own world (cf. 43:10–11). As readers, we now have the text of Ezekiel 40–48 before us. We know that the prophet has come back and fulfilled the commission. He has returned from his experiences over yonder, in visionary reality, and now speaks of that reality as being *šāmmâ,* "over there" (40:3).

As elsewhere in Ezekiel's book, for example, in the vision of dry bones in chapter 37, the prophet walks us through his vision precisely as he experienced it. This approach of deliberate sensory and emotive rehearsal profoundly affects readers. It pushes them to relive Ezekiel's experience. As we accompany the prophet, we begin connecting dots and reaching theological and spiritual conclusions along with him.

Ezekiel encounters the perimeter wall of the temple complex in v. 5. It appears again in 42:20, placing bookends around Ezekiel 40–42 as a distinct unit of the vision (Tuell 1996). This wall is not meant for keeping enemies out, but is entirely about defining sacral, ritual space. Later, Ezekiel is explicit about this: The wall specifically separates the Holy from the profane (42:20). The colossal size of the gate towers on the wall shout out to the reader the message that strict control of access to the shrine's zone of holiness is of utmost priority. The temple's sanctity must be carefully guarded, thus permanently reversing the violations of the HS, Zadokite covenant that led to the departure of God's Presence and the Babylonian exile. The super gatehouses accomplish exactly this Zadokite goal: They house guards who protect the shrine's sanctity, and, through architecture, they create an experience of highly controlled access to the temple grounds.

Ezekiel's preternatural guide, the gleaming man of bronze appearance, begins the temple tour at the complex's outer east gate tower (vv. 3, 6). This *east*-facing gatehouse is the main entrance into the compound, the one aligned with the main altar, the front porch of the temple building itself, and with its front doors (see 43:1–5). Already, intimations of an experience of Eden and an encounter with God are at hand.

"East" was highly significant. God entered God's garden, and the temple grounds, coming from the east. Metaphors of God's appearance in the east wind (the sirocco; Ezek 19:12, 27:26) and in the sunrise (Hos 6:3, Isa 60:1–2, Mal 4:2) reinforce the theme. Genesis 3:24 specifically places Eden's gate in the east. The Zadokites elevated the main east-facing positions within the wilderness camp. Thus, Num 3:38 (HS) privileges "the area in front of the Tabernacle, in the east toward the sunrise." This sacred locale "was reserved for the tents of Moses and of Aaron and his sons" (NLT).

Awaiting the rising sun after a night of vigil in the temple was an ancient form of worship (Pss 17:15, 46:5, 80:3, 84:11a), a rite that twenty-five elders are seen perverting in Ezek 8:16. Among all the abominations of Ezekiel 8, this distortion of worship was central (Ezek 9:6). (I return to the significance of the number twenty-five shortly.)

The Zadokites present us with a positive metaphor of solar theophany in Zech 6:1. There, the dawn of God's renewed presence makes two mountains, symbolically tied to the temple's bronze pillars, sparkle like bronze in the sun (see Note *Like bronze* on 40:3). The mountains are cosmic boundary markers (cf. Gen 49:26; "the two hills at the edge of the earth" in the Ugaritic texts, *KTU* 1.4.VII.4; Smith 2010, 232 n. 131). A third-millennium Mesopotamian seal impression of the sun god rising illuminates the

scene (British Museum no. 89110; southern Iraq, Akkadian period, about 2300 BCE; searchable online). In the image, twin peaks, flanked by gates with mountain lions on top, form an opening like Ezekiel's gate (43:1–2), admitting the divine. In light of this background, the bronze guide's gleaming in the sun is fraught with import.

Ezekiel's visionary tour has begun with a single, peripheral gateway tower. Twenty years earlier, when God's hovering throne first approached Ezekiel, a single gyroscopic wheel appeared. As Keil (1876a, 26) translates Ezek 1:15, "Lo, there was a wheel upon the earth beside the creatures" (cf. CEB, KJV, YLT). The focus is likely on a single creature as well as a single wheel, since the end of 1:15 speaks of "its face" (*pānāyw;* see YLT, LITV, KJV). Verses 20, 21, and 22 also isolate an individual "living being" (see NET, LITV, KJV).

That first amazing wheel, along with its living being, represented a contact point between worlds. Janus in nature, it is a bridging object opening into two realms. It bears properties defying all terrestrial norms but also contacts solid ground, our earthly reality. The east gatehouse of Ezekiel 40 is likewise a liminal, Janus, threshold point.

The reader gains a great deal of information in a short number of verses as Ezekiel's guide measures the gate tower. The temple compound is protected by a sturdy wall 10 ½ feet thick, with a gigantic gate complex atop it (see fig. 2, locations O and A). The gate is completely out of proportion with both the wall and the temple compound as a whole. Real ancient gatehouses never towered over the city walls they protected in the manner of this structure. As Greenberg (1984, 193) writes: "The massive size of the gatehouses verges on caricature. . . . Their length is half that of the outer court (100 cubits)!"

Realizing how gigantic these utopian gatehouses are—ten stories in height, towering over the entire temple complex—readers cannot help but recall the prophet's awe at the looming height of the wheels of God's throne chariot. At Ezek 1:18 he experiences them as "high and fearsome" (NABR), "tall and terrifying" (CEB).

The gatehouse both restricts and grants access. It is a sacral portal, a liminal point of transition between spiritual zones. Its towering height marks its importance in transporting humanity to another realm, while simultaneously marking the character of the holy zone to which it facilitates access. To travel through this long, complex gateway is to slowly and carefully enter a realm of larger-than-life, divine proportion. One dares to scale mountain heights along with Shamash (see the aforementioned seal in the British Museum, no. 89110).

Yard-long divine footprints carved on the floor at the Iron Age ʿAin Dara temple northwest of Aleppo, Syria, share this symbolism. The ʿAin Dara footprints powerfully illustrate how Ezekiel's utopian temple fulfills God's promise in the HS text of Lev 26:12, "I will walk among you, and will be your God, and you shall be my people." Like Ezekiel's gate tower, they are specifically situated at a liminal entrance area, namely, between the columns of the temple porch and on its thresholds (Monson 2000, 26–27). Both at ʿAin Dara and in Ezekiel, God has a humanlike body replete with feet (43:7) but absolutely gigantic in size.

In comparison to earlier Israelite gatehouses at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, Ezekiel's gate is markedly longer and narrower. It is 87 ½ feet long (40:15), much longer than most excavated Israelite gates. Even the extraordinarily long gate (82 feet) found at Lachish is shorter. On the other hand, Ezekiel's gatehouse is only 43 ¾ feet wide (v. 13),

which is average for Israelite gates and quite narrow compared with the gates at Dan, Megiddo, and Lachish (which are between 80 and 100 feet wide). The design provokes the reader to imagine a "wormhole" effect, an experience of passing through a long thin tunnel connecting two very different planes of reality. As John Strong (2012, 199) concludes, "The effect would have been an imposing tunnel, a corridor that would have evoked anticipation and awe, and which was built according to an orderly 2 to 1 ratio."

In using modern conventions of measurement to give English-language readers a realistic sense of scale, this commentary's translation obscures some symbolism of Ezekiel's Hebrew measures. The width of Ezekiel's gatehouse in English terms is 43 ¾ feet, but in Hebrew terms it is exactly 25 cubits (40:13, 21, 25). "Twenty-five," it turns out, is a highly significant number in the utopian vision.

Consider all the multiples of twenty-five. The length of the gatehouse, 87 ½ feet, is twice 25, that is, 50 cubits (40:15, 21, 25). The distance from the gatehouses across the outer courtyard to the inner gate towers is 4 times 25, that is, 100 cubits (40:19, 23, 27). The temple compound as a whole is 20 times 25, that is 500 cubits square. And the dedicated land holding the temple complex and the chief city, the "whole *tĕrûmâ,*" is 1,000 times 25, that is, 25,000 cubits square (48:20; fig. 5).

Ezekiel signaled the importance of the number twenty-five at the start of the utopian vision, introducing his visionary journey as happening in "the twenty-fifth year of our exile" (40:1). The elaborate description in the present context, 40:13, specifying exactly how the width measurement was taken—"from outer ceiling edge of alcove to outer ceiling edge of alcove"—again draws attention to the key role of twenty-five in

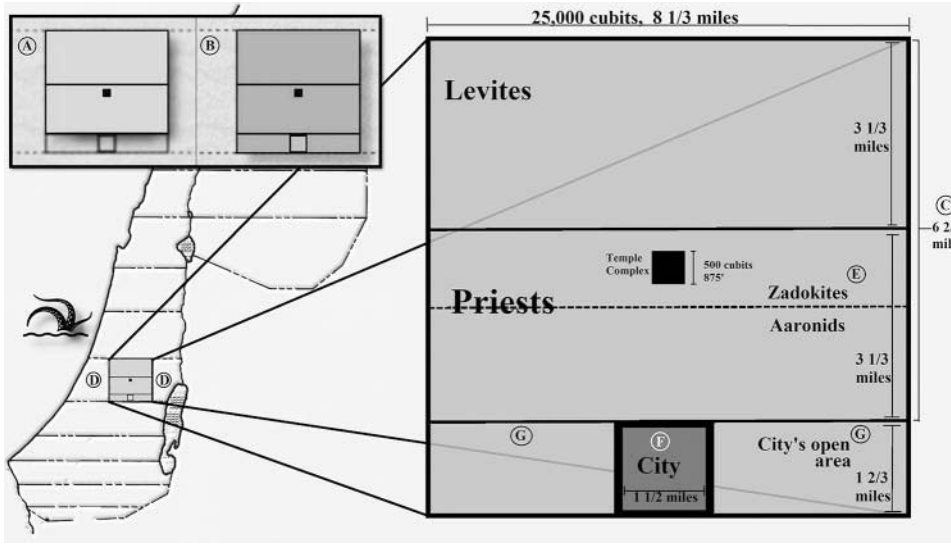


Figure 5. The Terumah (Consecrated Reserve). Drawing by the author. Key: A = Holy Terumah (the upper, sacred portion of the reserve), B = Terumah (the entire square reserve), C = Length of Holy Terumah, D = Chieftain's land, E = Most holy, Zadokite tract, F = New central city, G = City's open area.

Ezekiel's utopia. Our prophetic visionary, an originator of Israelite apocalypticism with all of its own numerology, is signaling that this number has special meaning.

Ezekiel does not elaborate on the meaning of twenty-five, but that does not stop an exegete from conjecturing about its significance. An idea of a refreshed priestly service is surely one symbolic connotation. Full-fledged priesthood began at age thirty in Israel (Num 4:3, 23, 30), but Num 8:24 (HS) allows Levites to begin temple service earlier, at age twenty-five. When Ezekiel 40–48 continually elevates the number twenty-five, its first Zadokite readers would surely have imagined new priests preparing for temple duty.

As mentioned above, the number twenty-five likely carried for Ezekiel a powerful resonance with the Zadokite tradition of Jubilee. Twenty-five is halfway to fifty, a symbolic prolepsis of the year of liberty (Bergsma 2007, 188–90). Significantly, Jubilee's timing is based on the number "seven," with all its intimations of Sabbath (Zimmerli 1983, 344; Bergsma 2007, 76). It occurs the year following seven squared (7×7) years. As Lev 25:8, 10 (HS) states: "You shall count off seven weeks of years, seven times seven years. . . . And [then] you shall hallow the fiftieth year."

Jubilee, then, is essentially Sabbath magnified seven times, and for the Zadocites, Sabbath observance is oriented on holiness. Knohl (1995, 196) writes, "According to HS, the Sabbath is a sign of the holiness of Israel (Exod 31:13), and Israelites who keep the Sabbath are like priests serving in the Temple." Zadokite texts link Sabbath observance with God's continual growing of Israel in holiness (Exod 31:13, Lev 23:3, both HS; Ezek 20:12, 20). Sabbath and temple together are thus the Zadokites' twin foundations of Israel's sanctification. Therefore, in stressing the number twenty-five and its multiples, Ezekiel is likely embedding holiness and sanctification symbolism at the heart of his utopia. The design of the utopia appears to aim at making Israel holy.

Finally, the number twenty-five has elegant geometrical properties. In view of the perfect square shapes in Ezekiel's temple (e.g., a square central altar, a square adytum), it is significant that twenty-five is a *square* number (5×5). It may also be significant that the numbers three and four stand behind twenty-five. The latter is the sum of their squares ($25 = 3^2 + 4^2$). The numbers three and four certainly figure centrally in the utopian temple layout (e.g., three outer gates, three inner gates, four Levitical kitchens, a four-horned altar). The gatehouse alcoves line the corridor in pairs of three (40:10), and they have four equal sides of 10 ½ feet each (40:12). (See Note *Each alcove* on 40:7.)

Twenty-five is also a *centered square number,* that is, a number that when laid out as dots on a plane creates a square lattice pattern. The temple complex is laid out as such a lattice pattern of twenty-five dots. The center dot lies at the square main altar, an inner square of eight dots forms the altar court (see Ezek 40:47), and an outer square of sixteen dots forms the temple's large outer courtyard ($25 = 1 + 8 + 16$; see Note *Yard* on 40:47 and the Image referenced there [see Appendix]). (On the outer courtyard as a square of 500 cubits per side, see Ezek 42:15–20, 45:2; consult Schmidt 2001, 186.) More broadly, a lattice pattern, with a hierarchy of nested zones arranged about a holy center, is precisely Ezekiel's vision of the entire Holy Land's ideal nature. These lattice patterns are crucial building blocks of Ezekiel's hierarchical world of tiered zones of holiness with God's Presence at the center.

Would Ezekiel have had a grasp, or even conscious inklings, of any of this arithmetic? We cannot know for sure, but Babylonian mathematicians certainly knew squares, produced tables of squares, and worked with the Pythagorean theorem one thousand years before Pythagoras proved it. But enough of this numerological speculation.

After observing the width, height, and length of the eastern gatehouse, Ezekiel turns to describing its windows and palm decorations. Many palm trees decorate the gate tower's corridor, suggesting the experience of entering an imposing orchard or grove. Eden for Ezekiel is an orchard of towering trees (31:8, 16, 18), and without doubt the prophet's guide is leading him toward a sacramental paradise of God's presence.

Palm ornaments on the corridor's piers and pilasters come into view as early as v. 16, and they continue to reappear. Verse 26 speaks of two palm decorations flanking the entrance to the outer gateway's porch (see Note *Palm trees* on 40:26; cf. Gen 2:9; Cant 2:3; Rev 2:7, 22:2). The twin palms mirror the paired trees across the outer courtyard on the porches of the inner gateways (Ezek 40:31, 34, 37). These mirroring pairs of trees astride temple porches (40:26, 31, 34, 37) are illuminated by the twin palm trees flanking the entrance in the façade of the temple of the Moon God, Sin, at Dur-Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad), built by Sargon II in ca. 706 BCE. The assemblage of symbols in the façade highly resembles that of the Mari investiture panel (see fig. 4).

The parallels with the Mari panel drive home the symbolic import of the porch's outer trees. The twin palms of Ezekiel's porches stand guard as sentinels. A parallel occurs in the Sumerian Gudea cylinders (ca. 2125 BCE), where two trees guard the east gate of heaven. These trees, in the Mesopotamian myth of Adapa, are sentinels at Anu's heavenly palace (George and George 2014, 166). In the Mari investiture scene, the guardian trees are the outer pair labeled *1* in the panel's symmetrical side frames (see fig. 4). Ezekiel will encounter other sacred trees as he ventures deeper into the temple (see the trees labeled *2* and *3* in fig. 4).

The cross-cultural role of archetypal trees as portals between worlds could be the subject of an entire study. In the Egyptian funerary papyrus of Nakht (ca. 1350 BCE), a tree stands before the entrance to the Beyond (Bradshaw and Head 2013, 78–79 n. 198). According to spells 109 and 149 of the Egyptian Book of the Dead, twin sycamore trees stand at the eastern gate of heaven, from which the sun god Ra/Re emerges. Both spells state: "I know those two trees of turquoise between which Re goes forth, which have grown up at the Supports of Shu at that gate of the Lord of the East from which Re goes forth" (Faulkner 1985, 102, 139). The gate with its trees is the portal to the Field of Reeds, the Egyptian precursor of the Elysian Fields of classical mythology (Taylor 2010, 243). The rising of Ra is, of course, like the rising of Shamash between twin peaks in the cylinder seal discussed above (British Museum no. 89110).

In ancient Irish mythology, the oak tree is considered the "tree of doors," a gateway between worlds. In ancient Welsh mythology, oaks guard against evil passing into this world from another, and homes use oak doors when possible. In Siberia, Buryat shamans call the *Weltbaum* (World Tree) the *Udesi Burkhan,* which means "guardian of the door." A tree marks ontological boundaries in some near death experience (NDE) accounts. Carmen B. had three separate NDEs, and all started with shining trees appearing behind a bright light (NDERF 828). A magnificent oak tree impressed Stella

during her NDE: "It was more imposing than anything I had ever seen, a brilliant green . . . (I could write a whole book about that tree)" (NDERF 1708). William AM describes a normal tree transfiguring itself into part of a more expansive, four-dimensional reality: "I could sense the tree in my front yard and wall to my house as a tunnel formed right through them in[to] which I was drawn" (NDERF 565).

As Ezekiel moves in 40:17–27 out of the eastern gate tower and into the compound's outer courtyard, he views worshipers' chambers, paved walkways, and two more gatehouses. One expected architectural feature, however, is strikingly absent. The inward-facing porches of the outer gatehouses have no steps leading down off of them. The stairs mentioned in vv. 22, 26, 31, 34, 37, and 49 all lie elsewhere, leading upward, not downward, as one moves inward (see fig. 2, locations F, G, and H). The lack of steps on the porches of the outer gate towers would have stood out as unusual in the milieu.

The above-mentioned Iron Age ʿAin Dara temple in Syria, which has many parallels to Israel's temple, was on a platform with a monumental staircase leading up to a covered porch with pillars. In this respect, as well as in its notable windows, it has the structure of a *bīt ḫilāni* (see Note *Windows* on 40:16; Monson 1999, 12; Bodi 2009, 493). This prized building type often had a flight of steps leading up to its porch. The several great, tall buildings within Ezekiel's temple compound all resemble the *bīt ḫilāni.* With the present exception, all these buildings have porches with stairs. Why are there no stairs to the outer porches?

Ezekiel must have already begun to suspect that his journey inward toward the center of the temple complex would be one of continuous ascent. The trek to the temple's heights—to the great altar's hearth, to the inner chambers of the temple building—would be an entirely uphill climb. There would be no stairways leading down, only stairways leading upward (vv. 22, 26, 31, 34, 37, 49), so that stepped increases in height signaled zones of increasing holiness as one draws nearer to the place of the dwelling of God's Presence (43:7).

The pilgrimage into God's presence has just begun for both Ezekiel and readers. Readers familiar with the preexilic temple can guess some of what lies ahead, but we have already learned that significant modifications and surprises will abound. Soon, Ezekiel will encounter something no longer part of everyday life in the Global North: sacrificial meat. Such meat brims with intimations of intimacy with God.

The Inner Court and Gatehouses (40:28–46)

40 [28]Then he brought me toward the compound's inner courtyard, [to a spot] by the southern [inner] gatehouse. He measured the southern gatehouse; it was of the same dimensions as the other gateways. [29]Its guard alcoves, piers, and porch had those same measurements. There were windows all around both it and its porch. Its length was 87 ½ feet and its width was 43 ¾ feet. [30]The entry porches of the gatehouses encircling the inner court were 43 ¾ feet wide and [14] feet long. [31]The south gatehouse's entry porch faced into the outer courtyard. Its pilasters had decorative palm trees, and its stairway had eight steps.

[32]Then he brought me [through the southern inner gatehouse] to the inner court on the east side. He measured the [east, inner] gatehouse; it was of the same dimensions [as the other gate towers of the temple complex]. [33]Its guard alcoves, piers, and porch had those same measurements. There were windows all around the gatehouse and its porch. [Like the others,] its length was 87 ½ feet and its width was 43 ¾ feet. [34][Again,] its entry porch faced into the outer courtyard. There were decorative palm trees on its pilasters, one on either side, and its stairway had eight steps.

[35]Then he brought me to the north gatehouse [of the inner courtyard], and he measured it, and it was of the same dimensions as the others. [36]Its guard alcoves, piers, and porch had corresponding measurements; there were windows all around. Its length was 87 ½ feet and its width was 43 ¾ feet. [37]Its pilasters faced into the outer courtyard. There were decorative palm trees on its pilasters, one on either side, and its stairway had eight steps.

[38]There was an annex with an entrance accessible from the entry porch of the [northern inner] gatehouse. There they wash the entirely burned offering. [39]The gatehouse porch housed two pairs of tables, a pair on each side of the porch's [interior]. They were used to slaughter the entirely burned offering, the purification offering, and the reparation offering. [40]Outside the entry porch, [down] on each side [of the stairway] (as one goes up the northern gatehouse entrance), were two more pairs of tables.

[41][So, altogether,] there were four tables on each side of the gatehouse. Thus, there were eight tables in all, on which to slaughter sacrifices. [42]There were also four [additional] tables (of hewn stone) for use in preparation of the entirely burned offerings, each 31 ½ inches by 31 ½ inches square and 21 inches high. Implements were placed on these tables for use in slaughtering the entirely burned offerings and other sacrificial animals. [43]Meat hooks—3 inches long—were pegged all around the [inside of the gate-porch of the] building [for use in flaying the animals]. [Their] sacrificial meat was laid on the tables.

[44]Outside of the inner gatehouse, up in the inner courtyard, were two chambers. One flanked the north gatehouse, facing south, and the other flanked the south gatehouse, facing north. [45]And he said to me, "The chamber that faces south is for the priests who guard the duties of the temple [namely, the Aaronides]; [46]and the chamber that faces north is for the priests who guard the duties of the altar (these [latter priests] are the descendants of Zadok, the only descendants of Levi permitted to come near to the LORD to attend to his service)."

Notes

40:30. *Encircling the inner court.* For this rendering, compare the NIV and NLT. The Hebrew cryptically refers merely to "porches all around," which at first glance appears incongruous: a plurality of porches does not fit an inspection of an individual southern gate tower (see Block 1998, 528 n. 73).

[14] feet long. A porch width of 43 ¾ feet makes sense, matching the data of vv. 13, 21, 25, 29, 33, and 36 (see fig. 3, location H). The length measurement (5 cubits, or 8 ¾ feet) in the MT, however, is puzzling, and the LXX and some Hebrew manuscripts omit the entire verse. The NJB supposes a total length of 50 (not 5) cubits (i.e., 87 ½ feet) that encompasses the "gateway as well as its porch," a figure that would make good sense (see v. 15). Making this figure fit, however, requires what appears to me to be excessive textual surgery. Following the NLT, I emend the length dimension here to 14 feet (8 cubits, the measure given in v. 9; see NOTE *14 feet deep* on 40:9). The alternative is to delete the entire verse, considering it the result of dittography (see *BHS* critical apparatus).

40:31. *Faced into the outer courtyard.* The porches of the inner and outer gatehouses of the temple faced one another across the outer courtyard (40:23, 27), mirroring each other in key respects, including palm tree ornaments on their pilasters (40:26, 31). The outer gatehouses are lower, however, and their stairways are shorter and located elsewhere, facing outside the compound (see fig. 2, locations F and G).

Palm trees. See NOTE *Palm trees* on 40:26 and the IMAGE referenced in NOTE *Height of the porch's pilasters* on 40:14 (see Appendix), a reconstruction of the palm ornaments on the pilasters of one of the *outer* gate porches. Unlike this verse, vv. 34 and 37 will echo the detailed specification of v. 26 that the palms decorated both right and left pilasters on the porch face, creating bilateral symmetry.

Eight steps. The stairways of the outer gate towers had one less step (40:22, 26). Here there are eight (see fig. 2, locations I and G). More steps will be added to the stairway leading up to the porch of the temple building (40:49 LXX; see fig. 2, location H). The symbolism of longer stairways leading up to higher inner terraces is a key

element of the architecture's emphasis on gradations of increasing holiness within the compound.

40:34. *One on either side.* The diction both here and in v. 37 describing the bilateral symmetry of the palm decorations on the porches' right and left front pilasters (*mippô ûmippô*) represents an abbreviated form of that in v. 26.

40:36. *Corresponding measurements.* The MT lacks "had corresponding measurements," a clarification I supply (as does one Hebrew manuscript) on the basis of vv. 29 and 33 (cf. NABR, NJB, NLT).

40:37. *Pilasters.* On the basis of vv. 26, 31, and 34, one would expect "porch/narthex" rather than the MT's "pilasters." The LXX and Vulgate have this more expected, and thus inferior, reading (adopted by NRSV, CEB, NABR, NIV, NJB). Along with NJPS, NET, NASB, I prefer instead the *lectio difficilior.*

40:38. *Annex.* The chamber for washing sacrificial meat is directly accessible from the gatehouse entry porch. It is up on the compound's raised inner terrace but annexed to the porch in such a way that the Levites processing sacrifices there (Ezek 44:11) were able to move between it and the gatehouse without being considered trespassers on the inner courtyard. The NLT assumes that the two structures were attached: "A door led from the entry room of one of the inner gateways into a side room." Most reconstructions, however, picture two separate structures near each other (see Image: https://goo.gl/vqgxb3; note the structures marked *O* in Keil 1876b, 352–53, plate I). The ambiguous Hebrew may mean that the annex's door was "in," "by," or even just somehow "connected with" the porch/narthex. Ezekiel is mentioning the annex for washing sacrifices only now, since he is moving into the topic of spaces and furnishings for preparing sacrifices. For the requirement that burned offerings be washed, see the comments of Radak and Lev 1:9, 13.

Entry porch. The MT reads "by the jamb-posts of the gates" (cf. CEB, NASB), but, as in 40:14, most translators emend *ʾêlîm* (jambs or pilasters) to *ʾûlām* (porch). The emendation makes even more sense here than it did in v. 14. Rashi, knowing where the annex must fit, but working with the MT as it stands, explains that *ʾêlîm* must here refer to "the sides of the gates" (see Note *Piers* on 40:10).

[Northern inner] gatehouse. Each of the inner gatehouses may possibly have had this annexed chamber for washing sacrificial meat. The MT has a plural, "gatehouses," and sacrifices do appear to move through all three inner gateways (see Ezek 46:1–2). My translation, however, keeps the emphasis on Ezekiel's present location at the north inner gatehouse. Ezekiel most probably envisions a washing annex only here, since special traditional significance pertained to this zone north of the main altar (see Rashi; Lev 1:11). Note how Ezek 8:3 takes special interest in the *northern* gateway to the temple's inner courtyard. This gateway, also termed the "altar gate" (8:5), led directly to the traditional zone of sacrificial slaughter. (See Image: https://goo.gl/LgzsAj.) In general, north-oriented zones and furnishings were of special Zadokite concern (Exod 40:22 HS). For Ezekiel's probable assumptions about washing sacrifices, see Kasher (2004, 795) and Milgrom (2012, 77). All meat headed to the main altar was probably to be washed.

Entirely burned offering. The Zadokites' sacrificial system had a variety of sacrifices, three of which were considered especially holy. (In HS the Zadokites use the noun "holy thing" to refer to these sacred animal offerings contributed to the temple and its

priests by the Israelites: Lev 22:15; Num 5:9–10, 18:8–10, all HS.) These *most holy sacrifices* (*qodšê haqqŏdāšîm* or *haqqĕdāšîm;* Ezek 42:13, 44:13 NABR, NIV, NLT) had to be cooked or burned only on the central altar, and, as noted, Ezekiel likely wants all meat for the central altar to be washed. That is why the tables of v. 39, unlike those of v. 40, are up on the temple's inner terrace (see the immediately following NOTE). Here, their meat can be washed and taken directly to the high altar. The entirely burned offering, the purification offering, and the reparation offering all belong to the "most holy" category of sacrifice (see v. 39), but Ezekiel names the first alone as representing the group as a whole.

40:39. *Two pairs of tables.* The tables are inside the inner gatehouse's porch, up on the raised inner terrace in ready proximity to the annex for washing. Sacrificial animals are not actually killed on top of the tables, but this is where their meat is laid, cut up, and prepared. Here, inside the gatehouse porch, Levites were to slaughter all sacrifices of the *most holy* type (see the preceding NOTE), collecting the blood in vessels on the stone tables of v. 42. The altar priests were then to transport the blood down the gatehouse corridor to the central altar for sprinkling. Meanwhile, the Levites were to skin and cut up the animal and take it out to the annex for washing. Once washed, the animal parts come back through the gatehouse and up to the central altar for burning. Unlike entirely burned sacrifices, purification and reparation offerings were not fully consumed on the altar but were food for the temple priests (see Ezek 44:29). In the case of the purification offering, we know that the priests were supposed to pour the animal's blood at the foot of the central altar (Lev 4:7). Then, they were to burn the fatty portions of the animal and bring the meat that remained to the cloistered priestly kitchens for cooking (Ezek 46:19–20). It was then to go to the priests' private sacristy chambers (Ezek 42:1–10) for consumption (cf. Lev 6:26; Num 18:9, 10).

Purification . . . reparation. The NABR (also cf. CEB) comes closest to the most recent scholarly understandings of the specialized terminology for sacrifice types, speaking of "burned offerings, purification offerings, and reparation offerings." These offerings make up the category of most holy sacrifices just considered.

40:40. *As one goes up.* The MT's use of the Hebrew participle "one going up" is unusual, with the diction probably indicating that the tables are astride the steps at the gateway's entrance, down at the level of the outer courtyard (NLT; they are readily visible in the IMAGE referenced in NOTE *Annex* on 40:38 [see Appendix]). They are not along the walls of the porch (NABR, NIV), where the annex for washing leaves no room, or aligned with the porch in some other unlikely configuration (CEB, NJB). Unlike the tables of v. 39, which are specifically for butchering the most holy offerings, these must be for the Israelite people's well-being offerings, which relate closely to their daily "profane" lives outside the temple. They were of three main kinds: (1) the thank offering, or sacrifice of thanks (Lev 7:12, 22:29); (2) the votive offering, or sacrifice promised when taking a vow (Num 6:14; 15:3, 8); and (3) the voluntary, or "free-will" offering, giving thanks for God's goodness. Butchering animals down in the outer courtyard makes eminent sense, since laypeople do not venture up and out of this zone and must enjoy ritual feasting down within it. The meat of well-being offerings does not travel up and onto the inner courtyard, although the blood and suet (fatty parts) do go up to the central altar (if the rules of Lev 3:3–16 and 9:18–20 still hold in Ezekiel's temple). Rather, the Levites take the meat away from the porch to public cooking installations at the outer court's four corners (see 46:21–24).

40:42. *Tables (of hewn stone).* Four separate (stone) tables held implements for slaughtering the sacrificial animals and preparing the meat, including butchering knives and basins for blood. Their exact location is unspecified, but only one possibility seems likely. Given the discussion in the immediately preceding Note, we know that the favored positions of Keil (1876b), the locations labeled *e* and *e* in his plate II, II (between pp. 368 and 369), are already occupied. Positions *d* and *d* are also ruled out, since the annex for washing sacrifices occupies one of these spots on the west. What remains is for one stone table to be assigned to each pair of other, wooden, tables. The position commends itself, in that the tables' stone composition would make them stable enough to support vessels used to collect the sacrifices' blood. Rashi specifically hypothesizes that such basins were positioned atop the stone tables. The blood must not spill on anyone, since it contains ritual defilement from the Israelite sacrificer (Lev 6:27b), from whom it removes guilt (see Gane 2005, 173–75, and the Introduction, sec. 4).

40:43. *Meat hooks.* The exact nature of the objects set into the walls is uncertain. The Hebrew specifies that the objects are "within" (NRSV, ESV, cf. NJPS; for this sense of *babbayit,* consult Gen 39:11, 1 Kgs 3:18), that is, inside the "building"/"[gate]house" (NET, NASB), not on the tables (NJB, BBE, and perhaps CEB). Nevertheless, the *BHS* critical apparatus does suggest that the objects may be on both the walls and the tables. (For this to work, the verse's final two words would need to be deleted as a gloss, and some of the language of the LXX would need to be adopted, particularly where it speaks of a cornice that is both "all around within [the room] and on the tables.") The reading "meat hooks," which I follow, is supported by the Targum. Radak notes the aptness of pegs for flaying (skinning) sacrificial animals. The use of the Hebrew dual may indicate forked pegs, appropriate for hanging animal carcasses for flaying (NIV: "double-pronged hooks"). In contrast, the LXX, Vulgate, and Syriac suggest reading "shelves," "edges," or some other type of projection or cornice (cf. NJPS, NABR, BBE). Milgrom's translation (2012, 79–80) does not reflect it, but he proposes rearranging v. 42b and v. 43a to achieve a heavily emended reading in which Ezekiel's tools go on shelves and the meat goes on the tables. So, too, the NABR understands all the implements and tools to be on shelves, whereas "on the tables themselves was the meat." Support for the idea appears in the Qumran Temple Scroll, which describes niches or ledges for utensils (30:13).

Laid on the tables. Taken literally, the verse's final Hebrew clause after the *ʾatnāḥ* reads, "On the tables was the offering meat." Of course, as translations such as the NRSV, CEB, NIV, and ESV indicate, the Hebrew may simply signify what *should* happen to their meat once the sacrificial animals are flayed. Nevertheless, as other translations (NJPS, NET, NLT) allow, the straightforward reading is suggestive. Ezekiel and the reader are surely at least imagining the tables *in operation,* being used to prepare meat for the altar. The utopian temple is here beginning to spring to life.

40:44. *Up in the inner courtyard.* The LXX speaks of the inner courtyard (cf. NJPS, NJB, NLT), which is in fact where the two chambers of v. 44 are located. I have expanded the translation to include this reference to better clarify the meaning.

Two. Following the LXX (cf. NABR, CEB, NIV, NJB), I emend *šārîm* (singers; NRSV, NJPS) to *štayim* (two; on the vocalization, see *GKC* 291, sec. 97b, n. 1). Although the rubric "singers" could apply to Levites (see 1 Chr 9:33), it simply does not fit the bailiwick of the personnel in Ezek 40:44–46. Zadokites and Aaronides alone may

perform such duties in the inner court (Lev 18:2–5 [HS]; Ezek 42:14; 43:19; 44:9–13, 19; 46:2; see COMMENTS on 44:4–31, especially on 44:9, 11, 16, 19). As God states concerning the Zadokites in Ezek 44:16, "They are the ones who will enter my priestly zone; they will approach my table to serve me."

Chambers. These priests' chambers must not be confused with the priestly sacristies of Ezek 42:1–14. Milgrom (2012, 142) identifies them as guard stations for armed priestly sentries, but the guard alcoves in the inner gatehouses are certainly guard posts enough (40:29, 33, 36). More likely they are service rooms for priests on active duty officiating in the inner courtyard's central altar square (40:47) and inside the temple building. Much scholarly ink has been spilled querying the identities of the priests assigned to the respective chambers (see COMMENTS below). Several reconstructions (e.g., Taylor 1969, 259) try to squeeze the chambers into the square precinct immediately in front of the temple building proper (that is, the 175-feet-by-175-feet square area of 40:47 around the central altar; see fig. 2, location J). Most recently, Milgrom (2012, 42, fig. 1) makes this error. He cannot be correct, for there is precious little room for any sort of substantial chambers there. What has confused researchers is the mistake of making the raised terrace of the inner courtyard too small. Its bounds extend broadly to encompass the areas flanking the shoulders of the inner gatehouses (see NOTE *Inner courtyard* on 40:19 and the perimeter marked in fig. 2, location D). There, at the "shoulders" (*kātēp*), flanking the north and south gatehouses and close to the outer perimeter of the raised inner platform, are the priestly service chambers. (See fig. 2, locations K and L; consult also the buildings labeled *b* and *b* in fig. 3 of Carley [1974, 271].) The chamber for rinsing offerings (40:38) is thus on the west side of the north gate, and the priests' chamber (40:45) is on the east side.

South. Here I follow the LXX rather than the MT (cf. NRSV), which reads "east" (see fig. 2, location M, for the MT reading). This situates the priestly chambers on a north-south axis, parallel to the alignment of the priestly sacristies of Ezek 42:1–14 (to be toured later). The Zadokites' chamber is near the south gate tower and faces north, corresponding to the sacral importance of the zone north of the temple's central altar (see 8:5; NOTE *[Northern inner] gatehouse* on 40:38). The Hebrew expression *pĕnê derek* (the face of the way) here indicates a posture of orientation and focus on the north zone (2 Sam 15:23; cf. Ezek 20:46 [MT 21:2], 2 Chr 6:38, 1 Kgs 18:43).

Comments

The inner courtyard of the temple compound is surrounded by gate towers nearly identical to those on the outer wall, although with an extra, eighth step on their stairwells (40:31, 34, 37) and with their porches and towering pilasters facing outward, away from the inner court, rather than inward (40:31; see Rashi). In several ways, and at multiple points, Ezekiel 40 goes out of its way to establish the latter point. The reader learns in no uncertain terms that the porches of the inner and outer gatehouses face each other across the outer courtyard. Keil (1876b, 192) notes that the orientation of the inner gate porches toward the temple's outer courtyard is "emphatically stated three times in vv. 31, 34, and 37."

The porches' differing heights is a constant visual reminder to all in the outer courtyard that all stairways in Ezekiel's temple lead *upward,* toward increasingly holy

precincts (see fig. 2, locations F, G, and H). It is a key element of a stepped, tiered plan of increasing vertical holiness (see Smith 1987, 57), part of a sacred latticework. Thus, the temple proper lies an additional ten steps higher than the inner court (40:49 LXX), which is itself eight steps above the outer court. As Greenberg (1984, 193) astutely notes, increasing gradations of holiness are powerfully signified by "the rising stages of the courts and the Temple platform (the sequence of stairways of 7, 8, and 10 steps)."

The text mentions no wall surrounding the inner raised courtyard (Greenberg 1984, 225–26; Zimmerli 1983, 355; Allen 1990, 232) and almost certainly does not envision one (Stevenson 1996, 44; Milgrom 2012, 43–44). This is a departure from the preexilic temple (see Ezek 8:7–8) and differs as well from Babylon's ziggurat, Etemenanki, which had two surrounding walls. Instead, the configuration matches the Babylonian pattern of temple buildings inside an outer temenos enclosure with no surrounding gated walls of their own. In Ezekiel's plan, no walls protect the central altar and the temple building proper. There is only the foundation of the raised priestly courtyard, which forms a low barrier between Ezekiel's outer and inner courts (see fig. 2, location D).

Just as the outer courtyard of the temple enjoys views of all the gatehouse porches, with their stunning pilasters and palm ornaments (see Note *Palm trees* on 40:31), so the court, with no wall blocking the view, enjoys full visual access to the sacrificial rituals taking place around the altar. Worshipers in the outer court can look up over the terracing to see the inner court and all the sacred activity there. They have an excellent line of sight to the central altar, which God's presence makes holy (Lev 21:23 HS). Far from cloistering central priests and their rites, the open design allows the sacrificial rituals to affect all of Israel in attendance, including those people on the periphery such as resident aliens (HS assumes that aliens can make temple offerings; see Lev 22:18). Not just the priests but all the people find a place "before the Lord" (Ezek 46:3) at the shrine. After all, according to the Zadokites, God's shrine and altar are there in Israel's midst to grow *the entire people* in holiness (see Lev 21:8 HS, Ezek 37:28).

Since the porches, as noted before, are an aesthetic highlight of the *bīt ḫilāni* building type, having all six porches face the outer courtyard makes it a place of elegant architecture—"a beautiful thing" (Rashi on 40:9)—that should inspire the respect of all Israel's faithful. Viewing the inner porches in operation, however, would not be the aesthetic experience of beauty one might at first imagine. Actually, the bloodiest elements of sacrificial ritual take place there for all to witness (40:38–43). Yet in the awefull sacrificial rites, we see Ezekiel's utopian latticework of holy zones come alive with sacramental power, absorbing impurity and disseminating holiness.

As the blood-filled rites unfold, the entirely burned and purification offerings go up through the inner gate to the altar, leaving Israel forgiven and clean, its life dedicated to God (see Note *Two pairs of tables* on 40:39). The blood absorbs defilement from the guilty offerers (Lev 6:27b), from whom it removes evil. As Gane (2005, 175) astutely observes, since the blood of a purification offering is already carrying the defilement of the offerer, there is no need to dab it on that person or otherwise apply it to him or her.

Sacramental power travels two ways, however, in Ezekiel's latticework of holiness. The meat of well-being offerings (*šĕlāmîm*) goes in the other direction (see Note *As one goes up* on 40:40), away from the place of slaughter to the outer courtyard's kitchens and worshipers' chambers (40:17). Understanding the *šĕlāmîm* as thank-filled,

festive meals of public fellowship, the reader perceives a flow of "sacramental" benefits out to Israel. The sacrificial spirit of joyful communion flows outward through the meat to create a shared feast, embodying communal well-being and rejoicing (see Bellinger 2001, 33–34, who also offers a good, brief summary of scholarship on the *šĕlāmîm* offerings).

Although the meat of the *šĕlāmîm* bears "sacramental" benefits, Ezekiel 40–48 does not explicitly say whether it carries "communicable" holiness, that is, the sort of *miasma,* transmissible through physical contact, that is seen in texts such as Exod 29:33; Ezek 42:13–14, 44:19. Suggestively, Gilders (2004, 146) argues cogently (against Milgrom) that the priests' manipulation of the *šĕlāmîm* blood identifies the meat going out to Israel as coming from God and God's holy altar (see Note *As one goes up* on 40:40). For greater traction on the question of tangible sanctity, however, we must turn to Haggai.

Haggai 2:12 understands that the "sanctified meat" (NABR; *śar-qōdeš*) of the *šĕlāmîm* offerings *does* indeed bear holiness (*qōdeš*). The verse includes discussion of "garment folds" precisely because, *presupposing* the communicability of holiness (see Lev 6:27), it moves immediately to the narrower question of the degree of contagiousness. Unlike impurity, which spreads easily, holiness does not pass first to meat, second to a garment, and then, inevitably, to some other object thrice removed. Notably, in this passage, Haggai assumes that *qōdeš* may leave the temple. A worshiper can carry holy, sanctified meat home for consumption. (For the arguments here, see Petersen 1984, 76, 78.)

An interpretive move referencing Haggai is sensible, since the book often manifests the same stream of tradition as Ezekiel's (see Tuell 2000c). Thus, Haggai advocates for the centrality of the temple, which God inhabits (Hag 2:5, echoing Exod 29:46 HS). Haggai 2:7 playfully echoes the ideal of God's Presence filling God's house (Exod 40:34–35; Ezek 43:5, 44:4; Zech 2:5), and Hag 2:9b reflects the ideal harmony of Lev 26:6 (HS) and Ezek 34:25–28. I therefore adopt the position that Zadokite thinking in HS, Ezekiel, and Haggai does indeed conceive of a "widely distributed" holiness (consult Olyan 2000, 121), which actually, not just potentially, sanctifies Israel (173–74 n. 3). Indeed, this holiness is thought to "radiate outwards to human beings" (Joosten 1996, 128).

Largely removed from the workings of a butcher's shop, modern readers may balk at the detailed description of a zone of sacrifice, replete with meat hooks, cleavers, and an annex for washing entrails. Ezekiel's first readers, however, would have had no qualms. Richard Hess (2007, 192 n. 69) aptly cites an Old Babylonian sheep sacrifice liturgy as an example: "Fell the sheep! Cut off the head of the sheep! Let the blood vessels (of the neck) drip. . . . Clear the feces from the colon and wash it in water!" There is no sense here of queasiness about blood, no Greek dualism separating blood and divine purity.

Sacrificial blood did not repulse Israel, but neither was its appearance a casual matter. Blood commanded great respect. Identified with life and sacred to God, shed blood must be absorbed by earth when spilled (see Lev 17:13 HS; consult Gilders 2004, 144). Ezekiel's temple uses ultrastable stone tables (see Note *Tables (of hewn stone)* on 40:42) to be sure no sacral basins of blood tip over. Such spilled blood, which could not even soak into the ground, would create a spectacle of abhorrence (see Ezek 24:7–8).

"Failure to honor life" by spilling blood "contaminates the very land itself" (Num 35:33 HS, VOICE; cf. Ezek 36:17–18).

Blood is life (Lev 17:11 HS)—the most precious of all possible offerings—so of course our passage is about blood. Sacrificial expiation entails a battle of life with death, and what wins the battle is "the blood, as life" (NJPS, cf. NABR). Its power counters Murk/*Düsternis,* the foul antipode of holiness menacing creation (see the Introduction). Blood "nullifies, overpowers, and absorbs" it (Milgrom 1991, 711–12). Because blood is so precious and powerful, its free offering to God in concern over impurity or in joy over blessing invokes divine fellowship. Gilders (2004, 124) rightly stresses that cultic blood manipulation always "indexes a relationship" involving YHWH. Hess (2007, 192) writes, "The sacrificed life of an animal is alone worthy of dining with God in joy."

In the parable of Jerusalem, the foundling found in Ezekiel 16, God discovers Israel in the blood of its birth, a threshold juncture of life and nonlife. God recalls, "As you lay in your blood, I said to you 'Live!'" (16:6). At the age for making love and giving birth, a young girl finds that blood is again a part of her life. A new test of life's power to prevail arrives. God again intervenes, joining with the girl in covenant. God recalls, "I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you" (16:9). De Troyer (2003, 54–55) is correct that blood here is about life unleashing its power, and also about God's certain involvement.

Just so, as Ezekiel tours the inner gatehouse porch, "sacrificial meat was laid on the tables." Though no personnel are in sight, somehow butchered meat, in all its uncooked and bloody rawness, is revealed (see Note *Laid on the tables* on 40:43). The vision assumes vividness in that right before the animals are flayed and the meat laid out, some butchering tables burst out of their two-dimensional strictures and disclose a rare vertical dimension. They are 21 inches in height, just right for real-life ritual (40:42). The utopian temple is coming alive. Israel again stands at a threshold when life must triumph, when intimate fellowship with God appears imminent. Farther along in the temple tour, at Ezek 41:22 and 43:14–15, 18, rare disclosures of vertical height will again sound this theme.

To emphasize the temple's graded zones of holiness and to keep the populace safe, Ezekiel greatly reduces the involvement and responsibility of laypeople in offering animal sacrifices (Olyan 2000, 138–39 n. 81; Gilders 2004, 151, 156). Now, the Levites receive all sacrificial animals within specific liminal zones of sanctity surrounding the steps of the inner gatehouses (Ezek 40:39–42). Altering earlier practice, the Levites alone now slaughter and butcher the animals (Ezek 44:11; Lev 1:5, 11 ESV, NET, NJB). Any animal parts destined for the central altar are washed and processed atop the raised inner courtyard, where no laity are permitted (see Note *Two pairs of tables* on 40:39).

The utopian temple no longer has the older wheeled lavers of water for washing sacrifices (1 Kgs 7:27–39; see the image in Ritmeyer 2006, 294). The old bronze basins played a key role, and their absence stands out in Ezekiel 40. First Kings 7 had devoted a full thirteen verses to describing them. In the preexilic temple, all ten movable lavers represented intermediate ("liminal") contact points with transcendent reality. Cherubim and other beasts on the washstands identified them as points of contact with transcendence (1 Kgs 7:29). Similar cherub images appear on a bronze wheeled laver from Larnaka, Cyprus, from late Mycenaean times (1400–1200 BCE; Keel 1978, 140–42).

A variety of biblical sources shed light on the huge preexilic bronze temple tank, the "Sea," and on the ten lavers, but no one, definitive reconstruction of their use is possible. Indeed, various biblical sources understand them differently. It does seem apparent, however, that whereas the Sea was largely inaccessible to worshipers because of its great height (7 ½ feet, 1 Kgs 7:23), cleansing water became available for ordinary use (2 Chr 4:6) through the wheeled washstands (4 ½ feet tall, 1 Kgs 7:27). The laity could use them to wash the parts of their animal sacrifices (Lev 1:9 NET, ESV, NJB).

There are no movable vessels of washing in Ezekiel's utopian temple. All washing of sacrifices must now take place up on the inner terrace in a dedicated annex attached to the north gatehouse porch (see Note *Annex* on 40:38). The sacral zone around the porch now becomes *the* defined threshold zone between worlds. Only there are animal sacrifices received by heaven. Only there do offerings become "most holy" sacrifices (a Zadokite rubric of HS; see Note *Entirely burned offering* on 40:38).

The final section of our passage, vv. 44–46, details two priestly chambers near the gatehouses of the inner courtyard. These verses constitute one of the more intriguing texts of the temple vision. The chambers, which are definitely separate from the priestly sacristies described later in Ezek 42:1–14, are located on the priestly terrace's perimeter. Contrary to several faulty reconstructions of the inner terrace (e.g., Stevenson 1996, 29, fig. 3; Milgrom 2012, 42, fig. 1), there is in fact plenty of room there (see Note *Chambers* on 40:44). They are service rooms and rest areas for priests on duty up on the inner terrace. Against scholars who insist they are guard stations, note that the phrase "guard the duties" (vv. 45, 46) simply means presiding over and performing tasks, as in 44:14.

Both groups of chamber occupants must be priests, not Levites (contra Odell 2005, 493). They are both so named (*kōhănîm,* vv. 45, 46); HS (in Num 18:2–5) bars Levites from the specific spheres of duty (temple and altar) referenced here; and the utopian vision allows priests alone access to the temple's raised inner courtyard (Ezek 42:13–14; 44:9–13, 19; 45:4; 46:2; see especially Note *Priestly zone* on 44:7). Stevenson (1996, 60) correctly states the thrust of the text: "The Zadokites have access to the Altar; the rest of the priests discharge duties in the Inner Court and the House building." As Rabbi Ovadia ben Jacob Sforno (ca. 1475–1550) indicates (commenting on Lev 18:5), the latter duties include tasks inside the house building like those of Lev 24:1–4.

Recall that the Zadokite priesthood, one of at least three Israelite priestly lineages, had been the central priests at Jerusalem's preexilic temple. Their origins trace back to Solomon's elevation of Zadok, one of David's two chief priests (2 Sam 20:25; 1 Kgs 1:7–8, 41–45; 2:26–27). First Chronicles 6:50–53 and 24:31 trace Zadok's ancestry back to Eleazar, Aaron's son. (On the historicity of this ancestry, see Olyan 1982, 177–93.)

Our text names the descendants of Zadok as the ranking group over against a lower, middle tier of priests. As in Ezekiel 43, it is specifically the Zadokite line of priests who have direct contact with the altar of burned offerings. This is the priestly stock "who may draw near to serve before me" (43:19). The unnamed priestly house, occupying the facing chamber and, like the Zadokites, working near God in the inner courtyard, must represent a differing, more generically Aaronide circle. (See Cook and Carvalho 2004, 11–13; consult Tuell 1992, 32 n. 37, 134, 139.)

Numbers 18:5, an HS Zadokite text, similarly distinguishes priestly altar and sanctuary duties. Unlike Ezekiel, HS leaves open whether to apportion the two duties among two separate Aaronide lineages. The HS authors, nevertheless, do elevate the Eleazarites in Num 25:13 and may assume that altar duties fall naturally to them (that is, to Ezekiel's "Zadokites"). (Recall from the Introduction my suggestion that the two separate priestly groups of Ezek 40:44–46 correspond roughly to the Eleazarite and Ithamarite groups in HS.) The text of HS never directly specifies this in the manner of Ezekiel's utopian vision, nor does HS ever speak of Zadokites by name. As elsewhere in Ezekiel 40–48, the vision intensifies earlier rubrics and strictures and makes them concrete.

Jacob Milgrom has objected to this interpretation, arguing that when Ezek 40:46b speaks of Zadokites, it is identifying the lineage of *both* sets of priests in vv. 45–46. The occupants of *both* north and south priestly chambers "are the descendants of Zadok" (Milgrom 2012, 80; also see Block 1998, 538, both citing Duke 1988, 74–75). This view, however, is strained and incorrect. Verse 46b, with its abrupt explanatory pronoun, looks to be an interpretive gloss (in dialog with Ezekiel 44) or a vigorous style defending the Zadokites' altar prerogatives. The NJPS version rightly reads, "The priests who perform the duties of the altar—they [*hēmmâ*] are the descendants of Zadok."

As Tuell (2009, 299) writes, "The most natural referent for the phrase 'These are the sons of Zadok' is the altar clergy just described, particularly given the reference to sacrificial service ('who may draw near to the Lord to minister before him')." Eliezer of Beaugency, whom Milgrom generally admires, had it right all along. Ezekiel 40:45–46 attests to a middle tier of priests, present in the inner court like the Zadokites but with duties like the Levites. The middle clergy are generic Aaronides.

Ezekiel's utopian program does not name the Aaronides or discuss their theology overtly because this group's thinking differed from Zadokite beliefs and traditions. There is no motivation to solidify their status as *the* official, named priestly opposition. Fascinatingly, a pattern of naming, and not naming, priestly lineages diametrically opposite to that of Ezekiel obtains in the Qumran Temple Scroll, which, like Ezekiel 40–48, describes an ideal temple and its practices. Carvalho (1992, 123) explains that the Temple Scroll speaks of the Levites and of the priestly sons of Aaron (22:5, 34:13b, 44:5) but never once mentions the Zadokites by name. Carvalho astutely concludes, "This author was either an Aaronide, or supported the Aaronides."

Instead of representing HS and Ezekiel, the Aaronides' theology finds expression in the texts of PT and Second Isaiah (Cook 2008). As in Ezekiel 40, HS outlines a pyramidal hierarchy of priests with the Zadokites on top. The PT strand, in contrast, is uninterested in distinctions among the priestly lineages (see Knohl 1995, 66, 85, 192, 209–12). The Aaronide authors of PT would thus surely disapprove of the tiered hierarchy of priests of Ezekiel 40. For their part, the Levite house would push back even harder against hierarchy. We will see their theology below, between the lines of Ezek 44:4–16 and in its echoes of HS. Note that Block (1998, 571–72, 583) grants the Levites much more access and a greater sphere of influence within Ezekiel's temple than they actually have.

The Altar Square and Temple Building Proper (40:47–41:4)

40 [47]Then he measured the yard [around the central altar], a perfect square, 175 feet on each side. The altar stood in front of the temple building. [48]He brought me to the entry porch of the temple building and measured each of the porch's jamb-posts. They were 8 ¾ feet deep on each side. The entrance [between the jambs] was 24 ½ feet wide, and the [front] walls [formed by the jambs] flanking the entrance were 5 ¼ feet wide. [49]The porch widened [beyond the entrance] to 35 feet; and its length was 21 feet. There were ten steps leading up to it, with a column on each side at the [front] pilasters.

41 [1]Then he brought me inside the sanctuary's main hall and measured the depth of the jamb-posts. The jambs were 10 ½ feet thick on each side. This was the depth of each jamb. [2]The entrance was 17 ½ feet wide, and the walls on each side of it were 8 ¾ feet wide. He measured the main hall's length as 70 feet and its width as 35 feet.

[3]Then he entered the inner room and measured the jamb-posts of the entrance as 3 ½ feet thick, the entrance's width as 10 ½ feet, and the walls flanking each side of the entrance as 12 ¼ feet wide. [4]He measured the depth of the room as 35 feet and its breadth as 35 feet, set at the end of the main hall. "This," he said to me, "is the Most Holy Place."

Notes

40:47. *Yard.* This is *not* the entire raised inner courtyard of the complex (*heḥāṣēr happĕnîmî;* 40:19, 32; contrast NLT, GNT) but the smaller perfectly square yard (*heḥāṣēr,* BBE: "open square"; NJPS: "forecourt") immediately in front of the temple building proper (see fig. 2, location J). As discussed above, it is the inner square of a matrix based on the symbolic number twenty-five (see Image: https://goo.gl/UH3caF). The larger entirety of the inner terrace platform also includes the three inner gatehouses, a washing annex, two priestly service chambers, two priestly kitchens, four sacristy buildings, a large building to the west, and other installations. The focus now shifts to the smaller inner yard, dominated by the central altar, which finds a fuller descrip-

tion in 43:13–17, and then to the temple house itself (see fig. 2, location N; also see Note *East front . . . together with the yard* on 41:14). As Ezekiel's tour progresses, the reader learns that there are three great square areas arranged along the central east-west "spine" of the complex, up on the raised priestly inner court (see Image: https://goo.gl/NvSFvc).

40:48. *8 ¾ feet deep.* The figure of 8 ¾ feet must refer to the east-west depth of the jamb-posts/sidewalls, not their north-south width (NIV), since the latter dimension is given as 5 ¼ feet at the end of the verse (fig. 6, inset, location A). The 5 ¼-foot width makes for a relatively broad entrance, but additional jambs farther inside the building become wider to create a tiered narrowing of entryways as one proceeds deeper toward the adytum (inner sanctum). We saw in discussing 40:8–9 that the porches of the gatehouses had an area out front for the jamb-posts of only 3 ½ feet in depth. Here, 8 ¾ feet is needed for the front jambs and columns, indicating that they are of much greater girth and thus likely much taller. Note how Ted Larson's reconstruction shows the temple porch as the entire compound's tallest structure (see Image referenced in Note *Jamb-posts* on 40:9 [see Appendix]).

[Between the jambs]. If the numbers in v. 48 and v. 49 are not contradictory, then the measurement of 35 feet in v. 49 must apply to the porch's width after passage through a narrower space of 24 ½ feet here between the outer jambs (v. 48). Thirty-five feet is also the width of the rest of the temple (see fig. 6). Having the text give the entrance porch two widths is confusing to the casual reader, and several modern translations (CEB, NJB, NASB) omit the reference to 24 ½ feet (which is not present in the MT, as discussed in the following Note).

24 ½ feet wide. See figure 6, inset, location B. The clause giving the width of the entrance between the front jambs has apparently dropped out of the MT because of haplography. It is present in the LXX, which I follow here since the numbers make perfectly good sense.

[Formed by the jambs]. The LXX speaks of the "shoulders" or side pieces of the entrance. The reference must be to the (north-south) width of the jamb-posts behind the entranceway as being 5 ¼ feet on each side (see fig. 6, inset, location C). Thus, the paraphrase of the NLT makes good sense: "The entrance itself was 24 ½ feet wide, and the walls . . . of the entrance were an additional 5 ¼ feet [on each side]." The measurement of 5 ¼ feet cannot represent the (east-west) depth of the porch proper, which needs to be 21 feet long (v. 49) in order for the total length of the temple to reach the full 175 feet given in 41:13 (see fig. 6, inset, location D). Note that the 21-foot depth of the temple porch is twice as great as that of the gatehouse porches (10 ½ feet deep).

40:49. *[Beyond the entrance].* See Note *[Between the jambs]* on 40:48 for the reasoning behind my paraphrase here.

Widened . . . to 35 feet. As Rashi correctly observes, *ʾōrek* refers to width here (the longer dimension of the porch), the same 35-foot width of the rest of the sanctuary, that is, its main hall and inner sanctum (41:2, 4; see fig. 6). Rashi also helpfully specifies that *rōḥab* here is the east-west dimension, that is, the length/depth of the porch. The width must be 35 feet and the length 21 feet, since the width between the jambs alone is 24 ½ feet (v. 48). Keil's diagram (1876b, plate I, between pp. 352 and 353) gets this mixed up, and the wording of several modern English translations is confusing (e.g., NRSV, NABR, CEB). The NJPS, NIV, and NLT have the correct sense. Note that Ezek

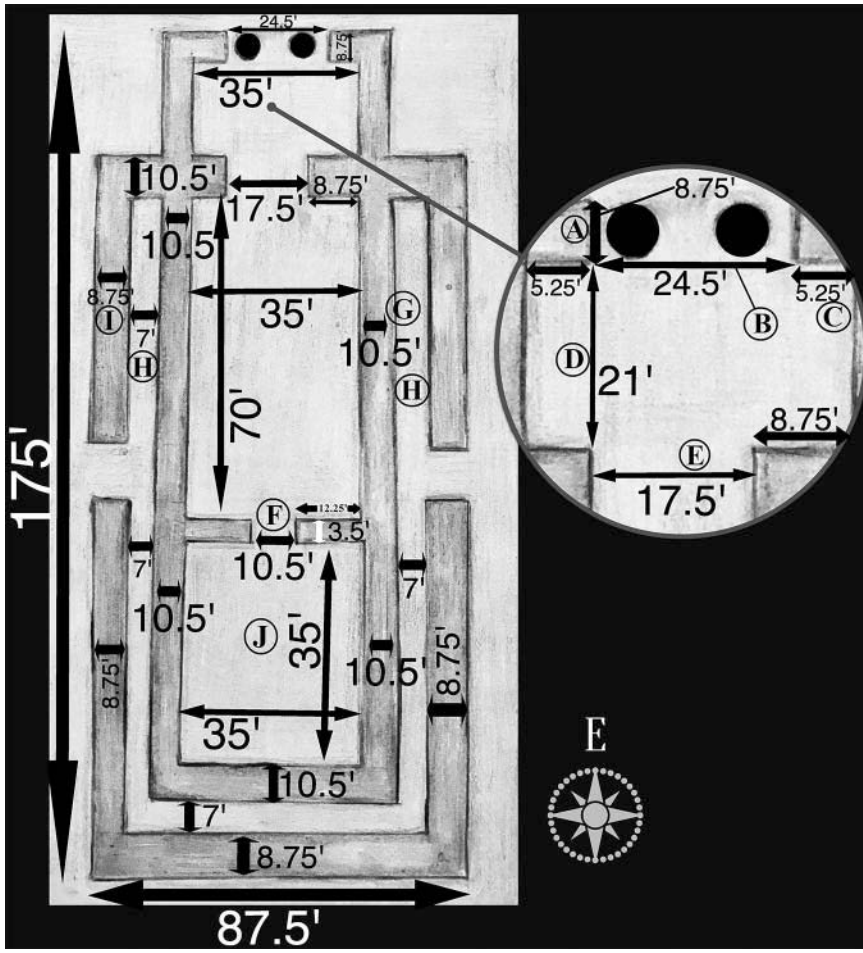


Figure 6. Ezekiel's temple building proper. Drawing by Margaret Wohler. Key: A = Depth of entrance jambs, B = Width of entrance, C = Width of entrance jambs, D = Depth of the porch, E = Width of main hall entrance, F = Width of entrance to adytum (inner shrine), G = Thickness of outer walls, H = Annex of side chambers, I = Outer wall of annex, J = Adytum (inner shrine).

40:30 gives a different width for the porches at the gatehouses, 43 ¾ feet, making this temple porch narrower (as well as twice as long), thus strongly emphasizing that anyone moving through the porch is penetrating into extreme holiness.

21 feet. I follow the LXX reading here (12 cubits, or 21 feet) because it correlates with the sanctuary's total length given in 41:3 (see fig. 6, inset, location D). The MT reading is 19 ¼ feet (11 cubits). The translation in Milgrom (2012, 82), "20 cubits," must be a typographical error (see his n. 169 on the same page).

Ten steps. The LXX gives the number of steps as ten. Steps a foot tall (see 41:8) seem high, suggesting that Ezekiel is manipulating his figures in order to convey sym-

bolism. If there are ten steps here, then the full number of steps on the three successive staircases leading up to the inner chambers of the temple building would be twenty-five. As we have seen, this is Ezekiel's special symbolic number.

Column on each side. Two of the ancient temples most helpful in illuminating Ezekiel's sanctuary, the ʿAin Dara temple in northern Syria and the temple at Tell Tayinat in southeastern Turkey, both had twin load-bearing columns supporting their porches' roofs (Monson 1999, 12, 17; Bodi 2009, 492–93). At Tell Tayinat, the columns' bases are shaped like lions (see Image: https://goo.gl/UjnS9q). Many imagine Solomon's temple with freestanding columns, but they were probably architecturally functional as at ʿAin Dara and Tell Tayinat. They supported the porch's lintel (fig. 7, location E; Ritmeyer 2006, 293). The columns had multiple symbolic significations (see Carvalho 1992, 6–7). The Deuteronomists, for example, understood them as archetypal witnesses to covenant rites (e.g., Judg 9:6, 2 Kgs 11:14; cf. Mic 5:4; see Cook 2004a, 212). For the Zadokites, as noted above, the columns symbolized mountain gateways—God's "mountains of bronze" (Zech 6:1), the portals to God's presence. The third-millennium Mesopotamian cylinder seal cited earlier (British Museum no. 89110) beautifully illustrates the idea. In the image, twin peaks, flanked by gates with mountain lions on top, spread open to admit the rising sun. The mountains are cosmic boundary markers (cf. Gen 49:26; "the two hills at the edge of the earth" in the Ugaritic texts, *KTU* 1.4.VII.4; Smith 2010, 232 n. 131).

Pilasters. Although the Hebrew term *ʾayil* referred to jamb-posts in v. 48—ones wide enough to function as sidewalls—here the term refers to pilasters (NRSV, REB), which likely projected out from the east façade of the temple porch, one pilaster on

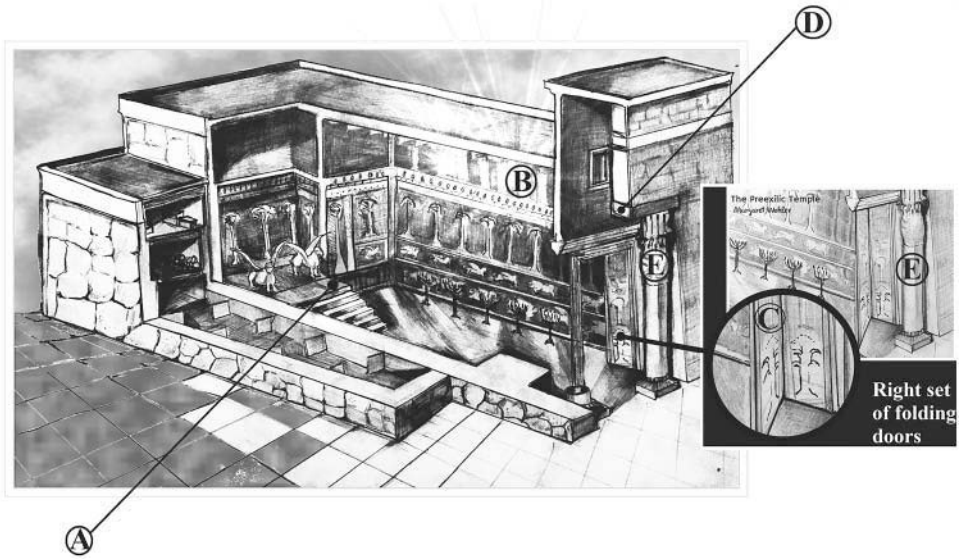


Figure 7. Preexilic temple building. Drawing by Margaret Wohler. Key:
A = Stairway to adytum (inner shrine), B = Clerestory latticed windows,
C = Folding doors, D = Lintel beam, E = Temple columns.

each side of the temple steps. The "contingent locational" Hebrew syntax indicates that the columns are located at the pilasters—the latter form their spatial "anchor." The columns likely stand within the porch entryway, behind the pilasters on the façade.

41:1. *10 ½ feet thick.* The measurement of 10 ½ feet must refer to the jamb's east-west *depth,* since their other dimension of 8 ¾ feet given in 41:2 must refer to their north-south width. A width of 8 ¾ feet when applied to both jambs (8 ¾ × 2 = 17 ½) and added to the entrance's width (17 ½ feet) gives us the 35-foot total width (41:2) of the building (8 ¾ × 2 + 17 ½ = 35; see fig. 6).

Depth of each jamb. I follow evidence in the LXX in reading "jamb" in the final clause, where the MT has "tent" (cf. Targum, Syriac, and Vulgate). The nouns *ʾōhel* (tent) and *ʾayil* (jamb) sound somewhat similar and perhaps were confused orally by scribes. The MT is unintelligible unless this is an imaginative gloss likening the main hall with the wilderness tabernacle (NKJV; cf. CEB), which might be considered as wide as the combined jambs if its outer coverings of ram and skin are included (Exod 26:14).

41:2. *17 ½ feet wide . . . 8 ¾ feet wide.* The width of the entrance into the main hall, 17 ½ feet, is significantly narrower than the 24 ½-foot entrance to the outer porch (see fig. 6, inset, location E). Thus, the entranceways are becoming successively narrower as one penetrates deeper toward the inner sanctum, starkly emphasizing increasingly holy spheres. The second figure of 8 ¾ feet must refer to the north-south width of the jambs (see Note *10 ½ feet thick* on 41:1).

70 feet and its width as 35 feet. See figure 6. As Rashi commented on 40:49, the width of the main sanctuary building matches the width of its porch. The main building would have looked wider than the porch from the outside, however, because of the annex of side chambers wrapping around the building (41:5). Scholars too often claim that the main halls and inner rooms in Ezekiel's and Solomon's temples have identical dimensions (e.g., Carley 1974, 277; Block 1998, 543; Odell 2005, 496; Tuell 2009, 290), an error due to forgetting that Ezekiel is using a longer cubit (40:5). Solomon's main hall is actually somewhat smaller, only 60 feet long (1 Kgs 6:17) and 30 feet wide (1 Kgs 6:2); his adytum is smaller too (30 feet by 30 feet; 1 Kgs 6:20).

41:3. *He entered.* Ezekiel watches, but does not come along, as the guide enters the inner room, the adytum or cella (the *dĕbîr,* 1 Kgs 6:5, 16, 19–23; 8:6, a term Ezekiel does not use). Unlike the probable case in the preexilic temple, no stairs lead up from the main hall into the inner room (see fig. 7, location A; Ritmeyer 2006, 288–91).

10 ½ feet. The set of three successively smaller entrances along the east-west axis of the temple building is now complete, and the narrowing effect is dramatic. We have gone from a 24 ½-foot entrance at the porch, to a 17 ½-foot entrance leading to the main hall, and on now to what is a final entrance width of 10 ½ feet as one faces the adytum.

Walls flanking each side. The text of the MT appears to apply the measurement of 12 ¼ feet (7 cubits) to the width of the entrance itself (NET), but this is impossible. The depth and breadth of the entrance have just been given as 3 ½ feet and 10 ½ feet, respectively (see fig. 6, location F). As a workaround, Rashi applies the measurement of 10 ½ feet to the doorway's height! Block (1998, 543) makes the same mistake (cf. NASB, NKJV). I follow the LXX, "the shoulders of the doorway, seven cubits on one side and seven cubits on the other." This interpretation matches the description of an

entrance and its sidewalls in 41:2 and allows the combined widths of the structures at issue to add up to the required 35 feet (12 ¼ × 2 + 10 ½ = 35).

41:4. *Most Holy Place.* Although Ezekiel does not use the term *dĕbîr* (rear shrine) from 1 Kgs 8:6, he *does* use the term *qōdeš haqqŏdāšîm* (Most Holy Place), which is also found in that verse (cf. Exod 26:33). Thus, Ezekiel definitely retains the long tradition of an inner shrine, a Holy of Holies, tracing back through Solomon's temple to second-millennium BCE Syria. In the ʿAin Dara temple, discussed above, some type of wood partition (evidenced by sockets and grooves discovered in the ruins) created a separate inner adytum, which had a sacred niche and an elevated area at its rear (Monson 1999, 13, 18–19; 2000, 23, 28). Ezekiel's 3 ½-foot-thick jambs provide a considerably more substantial demarcation and separation of sacred zones than this. His plan is more like the temple at Tell Tayinat, where an actual stone wall separated the adytum from the main hall. Also comparable are the inner shrines at the Munbaqa and Ebla temples, which were distinct stone chambers.

Comments

His initial tour of the compound's peripheral zones and structures completed, Ezekiel now watches as the guide measures the forecourt of the temple building itself, that is, its front yard containing the all-important altar of burned offerings (40:47). The yard is in the exact middle of the temple complex, and the altar is at the very center of the yard (see Rudnig 2000, 412; Konkel 2001, 366; Carvalho 1992, 160). Immediately, the reader learns that this central zone of the complex is a perfect square with sides of 100 cubits (175 feet). This measure, of course, is exactly four times twenty-five, Ezekiel's central symbolic figure, which itself is a square number (5 × 5). (See Comments on 40:1–27.)

The ideal, perfect square, already of significance in Ezekiel's source texts (see Exod 37:25 HS), is of great symbolic import for the prophet (Stevenson 1996, 42; Haran 1978, 152; Duguid 1999, 475). The reader first encounters the archetype of the *quaternity* in the fourfold array of cherubim about God's cosmic chariot. Under God's throne are four wheels, with four cherubim, each with four faces. Later, in Ezekiel 37, the quaternity archetype returns in the fourfold divine winds of the dry bones vision. Now, in the utopian vision, the outer courtyard and inner altar yard appear as instances of the outer and inner squares of Ezekiel's favored "*centered square*" number, "25" (see Comments on 40:1–27 and the Image referenced in Note *Yard* on 40:47 [see Appendix]).

A generation before Ezekiel, perfect squares figure prominently in the Babylonian versions of the temple building inscriptions of Assyrian king Esarhaddon (681–668 BCE). Just as Ezekiel's central altar and adytum are square, so are the ziggurat of Etemenanki and the temple of Esagila (*ARAB* 659D). That precise square measurements appear only in the Babylonian versions of the accounts suggests to Odell (2005, 490) that the square proportion was a specifically Babylonian architectural value.

Scholars such as Fabre d'Olivet in France and C. G. Jung in Switzerland have elaborated the symbolic and archetypal significance of the quaternity as it occurs across cultures and in the unconscious human mind. Susan Niditch (1986) has helpfully applied some of this work in illuminating Ezekiel 40–48. The perfect square is, first, a

microcosm of creation, a model exemplar of the entirety of the world. By refashioning and embodying the world as a perfect square, Ezekiel's vision offers readers a utopia that is peaceably oriented on God's authority as creator and cosmic king. Scholars of comparative religion will be reminded of Islam's square shrine, the Kaaba of Mecca (Arabic *kaab* means "cube"), which pilgrims circumnavigate like planets orbiting the sun.

Ezekiel's square-centered utopia, with its square altar yard (40:47), square adytum (41:4), and square altar (43:16), is a world in direct, sanctifying contact with God's holiness. The text of Ezekiel 40–48 nowhere states it, but a Jungian reading suggests that such a world can heal and transform God's people, as symbolized by the archetypal significance of the cubic "philosopher's stone" of alchemy. The mythic philosopher's stone transforms lead into gold, produces medicine that cures all ills, and prolongs life. For Jung, this cube symbolizes psychological and spiritual wholeness.

In broaching the "centered squareness" of Ezekiel's utopia, readers are "squaring the circle" as Jung puts it (*CW* 9i, 713). That is, they are experiencing the chaos of existence forced out of its undifferentiated inertia and resolved into the four core building blocks from which life emerges (*CW* 12, 165). Edinger (1992, 182) describes the process on a psychoanalytic level: "Quaternity, mandala images emerge in times of psychic turmoil and convey a sense of stability and rest. The image of the fourfold nature of the psyche provides stabilizing orientation. It gives one a glimpse of . . . eternity."

After measuring the central square yard, Ezekiel's guide leads him to the temple's porch (40:48). The door posts are enormous (see Note *8 ¾ feet deep* on 40:48), suggesting that the porch is by far the tallest structure in the entire complex, taller even than the gatehouses. Again, the reader is reminded of being in a sphere of divine proportions. Neo-Babylonian building inscriptions sometimes exalt the gods through a royal rhetoric of self-diminution. Thus, Carvalho (1992, 102) quotes a royal inscription in which Nabopolassar speaks in "my littleness" and as "me the insignificant," who "among men was not visible." Ezekiel's vision transforms such hyperbole into architectural truth.

The successive entrances to the temple building's zones of escalating holiness become increasingly narrow as one ventures deeper inside. The entrance to the building's porch, between the jambs, is 24 ½ feet wide (40:48). The entrance to the sanctuary's main hall is 17 ½ feet wide (41:2), and the entrance to the inner sanctum is only 10 ½ feet wide (41:3). One is reminded of the striking triply recessed doorway in the stone model shrine from the Davidic era discovered at Khirbet Qeiyafa (see Note *[Annex of side chambers]* on 41:5).

Ezekiel's ever-narrowing temple passageway sends a strong architectural signal. What lies ahead, deep in the recesses, is painfully desirable yet mysterious, *other,* and strictly taboo. The paradox is that of Cant 5:4, where a door—indeed, an opening one yearns to penetrate—keeps lovers apart. It bars physical contact, yet the partners are *not* really apart, for one declares, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine" (Cant 6:3).

The prophet's sacred passage through the temple's ever-narrowing passageway stands in antithesis to his earlier tunneling into the temple in Ezek 8:7–13. The same extreme antithesis occurs elsewhere in Scripture and in its history of interpretation. One thinks of the journeying to both paradise and the underworld in Ps 139:8 and in the Beaune Altarpiece (ca. 1445–1450 CE). Just as one must squeeze into God's presence by penetrating narrow openings, one may find oneself digging through into Sheol

(Amos 9:2), or, in the case of Ezek 8:8–9, digging through a wall, passing through an opening, and discovering loathsome creatures and an unholy inner chamber. As elsewhere in Ezekiel's restoration texts, the reversal of past horrors is a priority.

Relatedly, Ezekiel's temple porch is twice as long as his gatehouse porches (40:49) and greatly elongated compared with them in its shape. It is also proportionally elongated compared with the smaller preexilic temple building. The gatehouse porches are only one-quarter as long as their width (40:8, 30), and the inside of the preexilic temple porch was half as long as its width (1 Kgs 6:2–3, Zech 5:2). The porch of Ezekiel's temple building is fully three-fifths as long as its width—more than four-fifths if you include the jambs' length (8 ¾ additional feet; see fig. 6, inset, location A). (It is long, but not as long as Keil [1876b] has it; see NOTE *Widened . . . to 35 feet* on 40:49.)

The effect of the elongation for Ezekiel's temple is to make the visible entranceway into the building's interior feel as much as possible like a tunnel penetrating an alternate, *holy* reality. The archetypal columns on each side of the entrance drive home the effect (see NOTE *Column on each side* on 40:49). At Tell Tayinat, the portal was guarded by *lion* columns (see the IMAGE in the NOTE just referenced [see Appendix]). Much more should be said than space here allows about cross-cultural portrayals in architecture and art of "portalling" into holy spheres. In Neolithic passage-tombs, concentric artwork on the walls constructs tomb space so as to help the dead find their way within spiritual reality (Hume 2007, 38). The Rock-Hewn Churches of Lalibela, Ethiopia (ca. 1200 CE), use a narrow trench and tunnel pathway system to evoke a feeling of passing through earth to God. A modern movie, *Being John Malkovich* (2000), revolves around a doorway and tunnel leading into Malkovich's consciousness and, indeed, into alternative realities.

There should be no doubt that the dimensions of the temple porch were a significant symbol in Zadokite thought. Ezekiel's Zadokite successor Zechariah envisioned a flying scroll with the exact dimensions of the preexilic temple porch (Zech 5: 1–4). Zechariah's flying scroll hovers between heaven and earth, acting as a connection point between the two worlds. For Zechariah, the temple's porch must have symbolized a liminal threshold point, a portal of access to God's presence. Joel 2:17 depicts the porch as a zone of priests, who, in dire emergencies, could go there to supplicate God directly. Ezekiel 8:16 and 9:6 assume that sacrilege in the threshold zone is climactically egregious.

While the text states that Ezekiel is brought into the temple's main hall (41:1), only the heavenly guide, not the prophet himself, enters the adytum (41:3). Even before the return of God's Presence, the sanctity of the inner shrine is so great that Ezekiel is barred from admittance. Ezekiel's utopia may thus reverse all previous allowances for human entry into the Most Holy Place (see Lev 16:13–14). This would accord well with all the other heightened holiness strictures of the utopia.

Given Ezekiel's use of steps to mark holiness gradations, and given the probable raised position of the inner sanctum in the preexilic temple (see fig. 7, location A), the absence of an elevated adytum in the utopian temple stands out. The Syrian temples at 'Ain Dara, Tayinat, Munbaqa, and Ebla all had elevated areas in their inmost zones. Even the eighth-century BCE Judean sanctuary at Arad had an elevated adytum. In Jerusalem, the sacred rock likely elevated the area (Ritmeyer 2006, 288–91).Ezekiel's Babylonian milieu provides some illumination, helpfully clarifying the vision's symbolism

here. In Babylon, the elevated shrine atop the central ziggurat was not understood as the deity's permanent seat. It has no basis in domestic architecture and was not a dwelling. Rather, a ground-level temple located nearby, within the same sacral precinct, constituted the site of the god's indwelling (see Carvalho 1992, 40).

Ezekiel's utopia creatively adopts and transforms the Babylonian pattern. In the temple's square forecourt, the ziggurat-shaped altar (43:13–17) points ever upward. Like the ziggurats of Babylonia, it marks the temple as a gateway to the Beyond. Ezekiel's adytum, by contrast, is more like Babylon's ground-level temples. Notably *terrestrial* as well as most dangerously *holy,* it represents the site of God's earthly, bodily indwelling. This is the zone within earth's authentic life where God's Presence, the *kĕbôd YHWH,* permanently anchors itself in the world.

Like the altar yard (40:47), the adytum is a perfect square of 35 feet per side (41:4). Projected vertically up into reality, the square becomes a cube (1 Kgs 6:20)—four walls, a floor, and a ceiling: six planes. Coming together, the six planes create something new: the three-dimensional reality of space itself—that which makes embodied life viable. The adytum, then, as a perfect cube, symbolizes pure *life space* awaiting bodily presence, tangible indwelling. Ezekiel's "naked" architecture aims to point the reader's thoughts away from bare planes toward a living, embodied Presence, a Presence that intends to occupy this Most Holy Place and that, in fact, actually does so in 43:2–5.

Enough has already been said about the symbolic stability of the square quaternity—its sacramental power of order, of "cosmos." What must now be admitted is that there is also an inherent *instability* or *volatility* associated with the centered square. As Georges Bataille has shown, the center of a tiered matrix or labyrinth is *vulnerable*—put at risk by any "weaknesses" of the periphery arrayed about it. Such weaknesses at the edges are not minor threats. As Bataille aptly notes, they expose the center to a "total loss of sufficiency"; that is, they decenter the system and alter its entire structure (Noys 2000, 16).

The *vulnerability* of Ezekiel's matrix of divine holiness revealed itself most starkly in the first half of Ezekiel's prophetic career. At that time, forces of great impurity and sin (Murk/*Düsternis,* see the Introduction) in the land forced God's departure from the temple, allowing the Babylonian siege and the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. Since this must never, ever happen again, the utopian vision will continue to tighten rules, heighten strictures, and create new architecture so as to safeguard God's holy Presence as it indwells the adytum.

The Temple Building's Annexes and Surroundings (41:5–15a)

41 [5]Then he measured the [outer] wall of the temple building as 10 ½ feet thick. [There was a lateral, multistory annex of side chambers wrapping around the building's outer wall.] This [flanking] wing of chambers was 7 feet wide all about the building. [6]The side chambers—thirty cells—were in three stories, one above the other. There were [stepped] ledge-offsets running around the temple wall to support the [joists holding up the floors of the] chambers; the supports did not infringe on [the integrity of] the temple wall proper. [7]A wide winding ramp [within the side chambers around the temple building led] from first floor to second floor to third floor, for the structure around the temple had ascending stories on all [three] sides of the building. Because [of the ascending stories], the width of the [insides of the] structure increased as it went up. One went up from the lowest story to the highest [only] by way of the middle story.

[8]Then I saw that the temple building was on a raised base all around. This terrace, which provided a foundation for the annex of side chambers, was a full measuring stick of 10 ½ feet high. [9]The thickness of the outer wall of the side chambers was 8 ¾ feet. [Beyond the wall] was an open area [of the inner courtyard] lying between the side chambers [10]and [a row of priestly sacristy] chambers [backed up against the open area's perimeter]. This open area was 35 feet wide, and it went all around the temple. [11]There were entrances into the side chambers from the open area, one on the north side and one on the south side. [The raised base had room for a] walkway 8 ¾ feet wide on each side [of the temple building].

[12]A [large, rear] building faced into the temple yard from the west. It was 122 ½ feet front to back. The wall of this building was [an additional] 8 ¾ feet all around. Its [north-south] width was 157 ½ feet.

[13]He measured the [sum total] depth of the temple building [along with its porch, annexes, and walls] as 175 feet. The [sum total length of the rear] yard area, [together with] the [west] building, and its walls was [also] 175 feet. [14]The width of the east front of the temple building together with the yard space [that flanked it at the

shoulders] was likewise 175 feet. [15a]He then measured the [total, north-south] width of the [west] building facing into the yard at the temple's rear, inclusive of the terraced decks on each side, as 175 feet.

Notes

41:5. *[Outer] wall.* The thickness of the temple building's outer walls is substantial, 10 ½ feet (see fig. 6, location G). How the measurement was taken is not specified, but the guide probably measured the width of the porch's façade on one side of the entryway and then subtracted the 5 ¼-foot width of the front jamb.

[Annex of side chambers]. The material in brackets in the translation is assumed by the text and supplied for clarity. The side rooms in question lie immediately outside the temple building's 10 ½-foot outer wall (see fig. 6, location H; and fig. 2, insets, location P). Most commentators and translations assume this sort of reconstruction, but is it correct? The Hebrew term *ṣēlāʿ* (side chamber; 1 Kgs 6:5) sometimes appears to refer to "planks" and "beams" (1 Kgs 6:15). Haran's idea (see Milgrom 2012, 87) that Ezek 41:5–6 is also about planks or panels, not side chambers, has recently been revived, since the triplet form of Ezekiel's *ṣēlāʿ* matches the *triglyph,* a three-plank beam now attested as early as Davidic times in the Khirbet Qeiyafa shrine model mentioned above (see the roof beams in Image: https://goo.gl/x66HuH). Garfinkel and Mumcuoglu (2013, 155–56), citing the triglyph beams at Khirbet Qeiyafa, understand the *ṣĕlāʿôt* of Ezek 41:5–6 to be planks "organised three together, as thirty triglyph-like groups." Against this view stands solid evidence both from the text and from comparison with the ʿAin Dara temple. Ezekiel's *ṣĕlāʿôt* objects have an impressive foundation (41:8) and an outer wall 8 ¾ feet thick (41:9), features not applicable to planks. The ʿAin Dara temple had a hall of side chambers surrounding the building on three sides. One entered through locked doors flanked by winged lions. The annex had paved floors, wall reliefs, and at least two floors connected by stairs (Monson 1999, 16, 19–20; 2000, 30). Milgrom (2012, 87) puts it very well: "Ezekiel's auxiliary temple structure is stunningly corroborated by the remains of the Deir Alla and ʿAin Dara sanctuaries." Storage rooms for supplies and treasures are also known from Egyptian and Mesopotamian religious centers, such as temples built by Merenptah and Rameses II (thirteenth century BCE). The shrine model from Khirbet Qeiyafa is still relevant in the present context, however. It gives us an archaeological image of the "joists" of v. 6, and, through the triple recesses in the shrine's doorway, it illuminates the three "stepped ledge-offsets" that v. 6 notes support the three stories of the side chambers.

7 feet wide. The measure pertains to the interior width of the chambers and must be considered to apply with precision only at ground level. The chambers' width actually varies depending on the story (see v. 7, cf. 1 Kgs 6:6; see Image: https://goo.gl/bZpwAt). Also, we cannot be sure whether the stepped offsets holding the joists that support the chambers' floors are on both the inner *and* outer sides of the chambers as in the Image.

41:6. *Thirty cells.* The language of v. 6 is cryptic and ambiguous. Were there thirty cells in each level (NET, NIV, NJB, NLT), or thirty cells in all (CEB, NABR), or even thirty-three cells (NJPS; *IBHS* 287, sec. 15.4.b.10), perhaps with eleven per story

(Targum)? I tentatively accept the idea of thirty cells in each level (see fig. 2, insets, location P; cf. plate III in Keil 1876b, 385, showing thirty cells [*h*] on each story; Taylor 1969, 260, fig. III).

Stepped ledge-offsets. The meaning of the architectural term *bāʾôt* is uncertain, but most translators take them as ledges, paralleling the sense of 1 Kgs 6:6 (although the exact vocabulary differs between 1 Kings 6 and Ezekiel 41). For one reconstruction, see the Image referenced in Note *7 feet wide* on 41:5 (see Appendix). See also the additional notes that follow below.

[Joists holding up the floors]. The material in brackets in the translation is assumed by the text and supplied for clarity. For an image of actual joists of the biblical period, see the seven triglyphs under the roof in the stone shrine model from Khirbet Qeiyafa, an early Israelite town in the valley of Elah southwest of Jerusalem (see the Image referenced in Note *[Annex of side chambers]* on 41:5 [see Appendix]).

Infringe on [the integrity]. English translations sometimes indicate that the stepped ledges were not part of the temple building's walls in any way. However, the idea, taken from 1 Kgs 6:6, seems rather to have been that the joists supporting the floors of the chambers rested on stepped ledges that *were* part of the temple building's huge outer wall. Resting on ledges, the joists do not invasively penetrate the wall (see the diagram in Ritmeyer 2006, 284, and the Image referenced in Note *7 feet wide* on 41:5 [see Appendix]). The ESV rightly reads, "There were offsets all around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side chambers."

41:7. *Wide.* The Hebrew text has suffered corruption here and requires emendation. The verse's first word may be taken as a feminine adjective, "wide," and based on the Targum's noun, "winding staircase," I emend the second word of the verse (MT: "it was surrounded") to a conjectured noun *mĕsibbâ* (see the following Note).

Winding ramp. See figure 2, insets, location Q. As Rashi notes, the *lûlîm* of Solomon's temple appear to have inspired similar striking staircases in Ezekiel's temple annex. However, the nature of the *lûlîm,* a *hapax legomenon,* is actually quite a *crux interpretum.* First Kings 6:8 states that they gave access to the upper stories of the preexilic temple's annexed side rooms, but it furnishes no details. Neither do the remains at ʿAin Dara make clear the type of stairways connecting the floors of that temple's side chambers. The *lûlîm* are sometimes identified as "ladders" or "trapdoors" (see the image of ladders in Ritmeyer 2006, 286; NET note; *HALOT*), but more likely they were "winding stairs" (NJPS, NRSV, CEB), for the following reasons: (1) The Hebrew word seems connected with "loops" (e.g., Exod 6:4); (2) it has Arabic cognates that mean "screw" and "wind"; and (3) the LXX and Vulgate both translate it as "winding ascent." The vocabulary in Ezek 41:7 is different from that in 1 Kgs 6:8, but *HALOT,* citing the support of the Targum, understands the conjectured noun *mĕsibbâ* at issue (see the preceding Note) to derive from the root *sbb* (go around) and to designate something that either goes around or that surrounds. A winding ascent, or the well for it, would fit this estimation. That Ezekiel's temple had winding stairs is not incredible. Only about sixty years after Ezekiel's temple vision we have the earliest physical remains of an interior temple spiral stairway from Greco-Roman classical antiquity. Two spiral stairs are found in Greek Temple A at Selinunte, Sicily, and date to about 480 BCE. They lie between the shrine's porch and its sacred interior (see Koldewey and Puchstein 1899,

vol. 2, table 15). As for Solomon's temple, precedents from Egypt predate its much earlier *lûlîm.* Kitchen (1989) cites the spiral stairs in the temple of Sahure (ca. 2500 BCE) and the great temple of Amun at Karnak (1479–1425 BCE).

[Insides] . . . increased as it went up. The NLT of v. 7 captures the sense: "Each level was wider than the one below it, corresponding to the narrowing of the Temple wall as it rose" (cf. NJB, NIV). Note that the outer temple wall does *not* angle outward as it rises, like an inverted pyramid (NRSV, NJPS)! The annex widens on the inside, not the outside, as it rises higher (Rashi). As the NJB puts it, "The width of the cells increased, storey by storey, corresponding to the amount taken in." The stepped ledge-offsets supporting each story of the lateral structure progressively recede (see the Image referenced in Note *7 feet wide* on 41:5 [see Appendix]).

By way of the middle. Perhaps one had to actually set foot on the second level of the annex before proceeding to the third level. In this reconstruction, one would access a second-floor landing by climbing stairs leading up from the first floor. More stairs led up from the second-floor landing to the third floor.

41:8. *10 ½ feet high.* Here is another rare measurement of height within the temple tour (see also 40:5, 14, 42; 41:22; 43:13–14; consult Carvalho 1992, 144 n. 4). Ezekiel 40:49 has already indicated that the temple building is a number of steps above the level of the inner court. We now learn that the lateral wing of chambers also sits on this raised terrace (see fig. 2, inset, location R). The measuring stick of the verse, and its length, was introduced in 40:3, 5.

41:9. *8 ¾ feet.* See figure 6, location I. The chambers themselves are only 7 feet (4 cubits) wide inside, so they are thinner than both their inner and outer walls. The emphasis is emphatically *not* on their utility but on surrounding and guarding the sanctity of the temple building with thick stone barriers.

Open area. The *munnāḥ* appears to be "free space left between structures" (*HALOT*), probably needed as a walkway (see NJPS) to and from the large west building behind the temple (v. 12). The space in question is 35 feet wide (see fig. 2, inset, location S).

41:10. *[Sacristy] chambers.* As Rashi writes, there were chambers "at the north and at the south of the Inner Court." These sacristy chambers (NIV: "the priests' rooms") will be toured later, in 42:1–14. Against Rashi (and the NLT as well), 41:10 says nothing about the sacristy chambers being near a "wall" of the inner courtyard. As noted above, the inner courtyard does not seem to have had a wall.

[Up against the open area's perimeter]. See figure 2, insets, location T.

41:11. *Entrances.* The character of the north and south doorways to the side chambers is not specified, but 41:26 may indicate they had prominent lintel beams.

Walkway. The Hebrew refers again to free space, but here we have a border area only 8 ¾ feet wide, whereas the open space in vv. 9–10 is 35 feet wide. Hence, the reference must be to a walk (NJPS) up on the raised base of the temple building running along the north and south sides (see fig. 2, inset, location W). The LXX uses idiomatic language for an "area in the light," which could mean an open walk. (It is not a "wall" [NABR], as the *BHS* critical apparatus suggests.)

41:12. *[Large, rear] building.* As 41:15 will make clear, this building is west of the temple, at its rear (see fig. 2, location U). The NJPS paraphrases well here, referring to "the structure that fronted on the vacant space at the Temple's western end."

With regard to the several dimensions given in the verse, note that the larger figures refer to *interior* measures that do not include the building's outer walls. The term *rōḥab* refers to the smaller, east-west dimension, and *ʾōrek* to the larger, north-south width. NJPS and NABR are among the very few English translations that are not confusing here.

41:13. *175 feet.* See figure 6. In Hebrew, 175 feet is 100 long cubits. Verse 14 will give the north-south width here as also 100 cubits. Ezekiel thus again brings to the fore his mathematical symbolism of "twenty-five times four," the powerful archetype of the perfect square. Indeed, the following series of measurements of lengths of 100 cubits will produce a series of three perfectly square areas along the central east-west axis of the temple complex (see the second Image referenced in Note *Yard* on 40:47 [see Appendix]).

[Also] 175 feet. Verse 12 has given the inside width (north to south) of the west building as 157 ½ feet and the thickness of its walls as 8 ¾ feet. Here in v. 13, we have the measurement of 175 feet for the east-to-west length of the west building along with the temple's rear yard, which represents the following arithmetic: 35 feet + (8 ¾ feet × 2) + 122 ½ feet (the walkway of v. 11 does not seem to run along the back of the temple building). This dimension, along with that given in vv. 12 and 15a, yields another perfect square zone along the central east-west axis of the upper priestly terrace (see the second Image referenced in Note *Yard* on 40:47 [see Appendix]).

41:14. *East front . . . together with the yard.* This can be put more plainly as, "The inner courtyard to the east of the Temple was also 175 feet wide" (NLT). The arithmetic is as follows: 87 ½ feet (width of temple, with annex) + 8 ¾ feet × 2 (width of surrounding walkway) + 35 feet × 2 (width of the open area) = 175 feet. Ezekiel 40:47 has already given this 175-foot measure, in that it described the inside yard around the central altar as a perfect square, 175 feet on each side (see fig. 2, location J).

41:15a. *[Total, north-south] width.* The arithmetic is as follows: 8 ¾ feet + 157 ½ feet + 8 ¾ feet = 175 feet. The present unit ends at the *ʾatnāḥ* of v. 15, and v. 15b begins a new section of the vision on wall decorations and interior furnishings.

Terraced decks. Whatever sort of platforms, galleries, or decks may be in mind, their width must overlap with that of the west building's walls in order not to exceed the total measure of 175 feet. Milgrom (2012, 91 n. 203), citing Jastrow, reports the Targum's idea of an area at a building's wall "formed by abruptly reducing its thickness so as to give space for a balcony." The context suggests that any such decks or balconies are on the building's *exterior.* The reference is perhaps to an outer tiered, stepped construction, since the diction has this sense below in 42:3, 5.

Comments

Ezekiel's guide leads him back out to the temple's steps, where he measures the great thickness of the structure's outer wall (41:5). Around the corners of the porch, an annex of side chambers comes into view—a complex of cells similar to the one wrapping around the preexilic temple on three sides (1 Kgs 6:5–6). The annex is three stories high, but not as high as the temple building itself. The tradition of such an annex traces at least as far back as the 'Ain Dara temple, which was flanked by multistoried hallways (see Note *[Annex of side chambers]* on 41:5). As in Ezekiel's temple, 'Ain Dara's

annex had stairs leading from the ground floor to the upper side chambers (see Monson 1999, 16).

As in the preexilic temple, the side chambers connect to the walls of the temple building by means of beams resting on recessed ledges in the walls' outer faces (Ezek 41:6). The beams are specifically *not* inserted into any holes in the temple walls. Rashi notes how unusual this is: "Builders usually make holes in the wall and thrust the beams into the holes." The idea of making holes (and thereby also risking cracks) would, to a Zadokite's mind, violate the wall's symbolic wholeness (cf. Exod 20:25 and the "whole stones" of Deut 27:6, NET). (The diction used in 1 Kgs 6:7 is reminiscent of that in Deut 27:6 and Josh 8:31, although English translations do not show it.) But that is not all. More important, the inner sanctum especially cannot have outside openings. They would undermine Ezekiel's insistence on sealing the *kābôd*'s indwelling (44:2). There must be no cracks, holes, or windows.

Ezekiel 41:3 mentions no stairs to the inner chamber (see Note *He entered* on 41:3), and Ezek 41:16–18 indicates that carved wood paneling lies above the room's entrance but under the main hall's clerestory windows. Thus, the adytum must be moored on the temple's ground-floor level, a position excluding the possibility of windows. A perfect cube as in preexilic times, and thus only 35 feet tall, it was shorter than the annex of chambers enveloping it, which were 44 or more feet high (Block 1998, 550, fig. 5). Clearly, then, the inner sanctum was windowless and sealed—it remained, as in 1 Kgs 8:12, a realm of thick darkness. One cannot help but compare Baal's windowless palace in Ugaritic myth. There, Kothar-wa-Khasis builds Baal a palace, but Baal insists on no windows, no access for intruders.

We have seen Ezekiel's stress on a *living* God, the font of all life. Windows, however, are associated with *death,* which God abhors (Ezek 43:9). In Jer 9:21 Death personified breaks into houses through the windows. So too, Mesopotamian demons slithered through windows and cracks in walls to kill babies and children (Johnston 2002, 30). Even in modern times, some families close the curtains when a neighbor dies.

We have noted that in Ezekiel's symbolic universe, by indwelling the temple, God's Presence (the *kābôd*) makes itself vulnerable to precisely such sinister threats as those of death and chaos (Murk/*Düsternis;* see the Introduction). Here again we encounter the sensitivity and frailty of an embodied God and a "centered-square" utopia. Here again, life itself takes to heart the threat to life of desecration, sin, and death.

The spiral stairways of the annex of side chambers stand out in this section. Verse 7 insists that these unique, interior stairs or ramps are the only way up the annex structure. The stricture accomplishes at least three things. First, it assures that movement about the side chambers of the annex does not distract the attention of faithful devotees in the temple's outer courtyard. Their focus must remain on the sacrificial rites of worship taking place in the inner gatehouse porches and on the square altar yard.

Second, the new stricture emphasizes the strong vertical dimension to hierarchical holiness, enforcing careful reverence in accessing upper strata on the temple's raised terrace. All movement upward is routed "by way of the middle story," that is, by passing through defined zones of graded holiness. There are no ladders straight to top floors, no outside ramps from zones outside the sacred temple terrace. As Milgrom (2012, 90)

puts it: "Don't think that you can ascend to the top via an outside ramp, even though it would allow for a rapid ascent to the top by bypassing the middle level."

Milgrom is likely thinking of the stairways in the Qumran Temple Scroll and in the Mishnah's Middot tractate. The Temple Scroll has a freestanding staircase building with a ramp connecting its upper chamber to the top floors of the annex (Carvalho 1992, 131–32, 139). Middot describes a winding staircase leading to a rooftop passage and eventually to rooftop openings into the temple's adytum (m. Mid. 4:5; Lundquist 2008, 121).

Third, it is hard to ignore a numeric emphasis here on "three" and on its symbolic value. Just as the temple building has three parts (porch, hall, and adytum), so also the annex structure has three floors. Ascending the annex means setting foot on all three of its levels. And reaching the top floor means using three stairways. One must climb onto the raised terrace via the porch's stairs (40:49), make a mandatory visit to the annex's middle floor (41:7), and only then ascend to the uppermost level.

A symbolic three count appears again in vv. 13–15. Here, a series of lengths measured at 100 cubits produces a neat row of three perfectly square zones along the central east-west axis of the temple complex (see the second Image referenced in Note *Yard* on 40:47 [see Appendix]). This unique geometric pattern is anticipated in the twin rows of three perfectly square alcoves along the corridors of each of the complex's six guardhouses. Ezekiel does not specify the meaning of the symbolism, but one does not have to be Dan Brown's Robert Langdon to decipher it.

Any good dictionary of symbols reveals the religious ideas associated across history with the numbers three and four and triangles, squares, pyramids, and cubes. We have already seen that the number four, along with the square and its four cardinal points, represents the terrestrial, the earthly, and the embodied. The square symbolically transforms chaos into order, brings the Creator's life and sovereign lordship to earth. In contrast, the number three, together with the triangle and the pyramid, represents the spiritual, that which lies above and beyond the terrestrial. In the Hebrew Bible, the Lord is God of three ancestors (Gen 50:24); Abraham encounters God as three men (Gen 18:2); notable prayers, benedictions, and doxologies have a triadic form (Gen 48: 15–16; Num 6:24–26; Isa 6:3, 33:22). It need hardly be said that three plus four equals seven, which for Ezekiel represents Sabbath holiness. (Sabbath and its sanctifying power are central for both HS and Ezekiel; see Exod 20:11, 35:2; Lev 23:3, 25:4, all HS; Ezek 20:12; 22:8, 26; 23:38; 44:24; 46:4–5.)

Architecture and other symbol systems often juxtapose the number three and its meaning to all that four represents. Within alchemy, for example, the mandala counterposes squares and triangles. To counterpose three and four is to override the dualism between the transcendent and the terrestrial. In Ezekiel's case, it is to imagine the divine, in all its transcendent otherness, becoming terrestrial, taking on embodied form. It is to declare the imminent advent of the "incarnate" Presence, the *kābôd* (43:2–4).

In the utopian temple, each of the three square areas along the central axis has its own connection with transcendent reality, its own "pyramidal" symbolism. The inner yard in front of the temple building has its ziggurat-shaped altar (43:13–27), a nexus of earth and heaven. The second square around the temple building rests on a 10 ½-foot-high raised terrace (40:49, 41:8). Mirroring the ziggurat-shaped altar, it is

approached from the east by a set of stairs (Carvalho 1992, 160–61). The third square encompassing the rear, west building represents the base camp of God's mighty war chariots, which Zech 6:1–8 equates with the four winds, the four spirits of Ezek 37:9. Ezekiel's *linear* arrangement of his three sacred square zones differs markedly from the concentric orientation of the Qumran Temple Scroll (see Carvalho 1992, 156). One reason is his vision's momentous, definitive *linear* procession of the Presence along the squares' east-west axis (43:1–12).

Ezekiel's rear, west building (41:12, 13, 15) has always intrigued scholars. The idea of Milgrom (2012, 90) that this was originally the site of the royal palace is without basis. Indeed, there was no room for it there (see the Image referenced in Note *[Northern inner] gatehouse* on 40:38 [see Appendix]; Carvalho 1992, 163 n. 67; Barton 1920, plate 83, fig. 243). Rather, the building's origins appear to lie in memories of the temple's sun chariots, which were housed in a structure on the temple compound's perimeter. According to 2 Kgs 23:11, the chariots' housing was in the *parwārîm,* a term that reoccurs in a singular form (*parbār*) in 1 Chr 26:16–18. The latter text clarifies that the *parbār* was a building at the western, rear area of the temple complex—precisely the locale occupied by Ezekiel's great west building.

Unlike in the Qumran Temple Scroll, Ezekiel places no gatehouses, outer or inner ones, facing west (Zimmerli 1983, 381; Carvalho 1992, 156). Instead, the west building is there, with its unspoken symbolic identity as the stables housing God's awesome chariot defense force. According to Zech 6:8, God's chariots fly out to "vent the anger of [God's] spirit" (NLT; the diction is that of Ezek 5:13, 24:13). Their target is God's great enemy, chaos. Here in Ezekiel 41, the utopia's architecture precludes any encroachment of chaos sneaking up from the west, from the direction of the chaotic western sea (*derek-hayyām,* 41:12; Yamm in the Baal cycle). Again, one cannot help but think of Baal's initial refusal to have windows in his palace out of continuing concern about Yamm.

Wall Decoration and Interior Structures (41:15b–26)

41 [15b]The interior of the temple's main hall and its outer porch [16]were paneled [with wood]. The [hall's clerestory] latticed windows and their frames with recessed grooves had precious wood facing all around three sides down to their sills. Wooden paneling covered the walls from the floor up to the windows, extending to frame the windows. [17]Above the entrance [to the inner sanctum] and inside it, as well as outside [in the main hall], around all the walls inside and outside [the adytum], at regular intervals, [18]cherubim and palm trees were carved. [There was a patterned repetition of] a palm tree between two cherubim, with each cherub having two faces: [19]a human face turned toward the palm tree on the one side, and the face of a lion turned toward the palm tree on the other side. They were carved all around the whole temple building. [20]From the floor to above door height, cherubim and palm trees were carved.

[21]The main hall had four-sided doorposts, and the doorway at the front of the [Most] Holy Place was similar. [22]The altar table [in the main hall] was wood, 5¼ feet high and 3 ½ feet square. Its corners, base, and sides were wood. The man said to me, "This is the table that stands before the Lord."

[23]The main hall and the [Most] Holy Place each had a partition with folding accordion doors, [24]a folding pair of panels on each side—one set of hinged leaves on one side and one set on the other. [25]The doors of the main hall were carved with cherubim and palm trees, like those carved on the walls. There was a [prominent] lintel-beam on the front of the outside porch. [26][So too,] there were latticed windows and palm trees on both sidewalls of the [temple] porch. The [temple building's] side chambers also had [prominent] lintels [over their doors].

Notes

41:15b. *Interior.* My translation, which sees a reference to the main hall's interior (as do the NJPS, NABR, CEB, NET), differs from some other English versions that include reference to the building's inner sanctum (NRSV, NIV, NLT). The Hebrew makes no

mention of the adytum, which would, as noted, surely have lacked the high clerestory windows of v. 16 (see Comments on 41:5–15a).

Outer porch. The MT speaks of the porch(es) being "of the court," but the building's porch/narthex does not literally extend into the square yard around the altar (only the staircase is physically within the yard). Based on the LXX, I emend "court" to *ḥîṣôn* (outer) here. The adjective often modifies "court" in Ezekiel 40–48, and a scribe probably confused the two words.

41:16. *Paneled.* The MT appears to add that the sanctuary's threshold/doorsill area is included along with its main hall and porch as a paneled zone (cf. NJPS, NIV, NJB, ESV). Rather than retaining the MT noun *sap* (threshold), however, it is better to read the verb *sāpan,* meaning "cover" or "panel" (see *HALOT*). Thus, the interpretation of the LXX makes good sense: "The shrine and . . . the outer porch were paneled" (as in the NRSV, NABR, CEB). Note, however, that the LXX misreads the Hebrew word "interior" as "corners."

[Clerestory] latticed windows. Ezekiel mentioned "latticed windows" in 40:16, in connection with the outer gates of the temple complex (for an analysis of their character, see Note *Windows* on 40:16). If here (and also in 41:26) they are again functional windows, then they are high *clerestory* windows near the top of the wall where it rises above the outer three-story-high annex structure (see fig. 7, location B). Another possibility is that the objects Ezekiel describes are niches or faux windows (such as the one found at the 'Ain Dara temple; see Note *Windows* on 40:16). Perhaps Ezekiel's temple had both lower faux windows and upper clerestory windows.

Recessed grooves. The Hebrew text is difficult here, with English translations varying widely. The term that I have paraphrased as "frame with recessed grooves" appeared in 41:15a with a possible meaning of "terraced decks," and an idea of some sort of interior balconies or "galleries" is *perhaps* possible here ("galleries all around," NET, ESV, cf. NIV, NJB; "three courses of promenades," CEB). The immediate context, however, concerns windows, and the *ʾattîqîm* are most likely window-frame "recesses" (NABR)—*rabbets. Rabbets* are, in effect, small-scale recessed "insets/galleries." The stone shrine model from Khirbet Qeiyafa displays this very kind of design in its triply recessed doorway (see Note *[Annex of side chambers]* on 41:5 and the Image referenced there [see Appendix]). In fact, the design is well attested for windows of grand buildings in Israel's milieu (see the ivory relief "Woman in a Window," Note *Windows* on 40:16 [see Appendix]).

Wood facing. HALOT describes the noun *śāḥîp* as a craftsman's technical term, which is not now fully understood. An Akkadian cognate suggests a wood veneer (overlay layer).

Sills. The term "sill" may signify a doorsill (NRSV, ESV, NJB), but the NABR captures a more straightforward sense that preserves a context describing windows: "The windows had recesses and precious wood trim around all three sides except the [window] sill." This fits the "Woman in a Window" ivory (see Note *Windows* on 40:16).

Frame the windows. As the NJPS reads, "There was wainscoting from the floor to the windows, including the window frames." Wainscoting is wood paneling that covers the lower part of a room's walls. Ezekiel's paneling goes higher, up to the clerestory level.

41:17. *At regular intervals.* The MT has a cryptic phrase "by measurements" here (as in the NET), which is lacking in the LXX (followed by the NABR, CEB, NJB). This is likely ancient technical terminology related to interior decor, probably indicating a *patterned* design (as in the NJPS and NRSV; the NIV reads "regular intervals"). Besides the cherub pattern on the walls, special notice is given of cherubim above the adytum's entrance. These cherubim directly recall the ones worked into the curtain guarding the entrance to the Most Holy Place in the wilderness tabernacle (Exod 26:31–33) and the ones on the olivewood doors leading to the nave and to the inner sanctum of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:31–35).

41:18. *Cherubim and palm trees.* Artifacts, such as a Phoenician ivory carving from Arslan Tash, give us a clear picture of this iconography (Barnett 1982, plate 47b). Note that Barnett's term for cherubim is "sphinxes."

Were carved. I take the *qal* passive participle of the MT, "it was carved," to refer back to the wooden paneling of v. 16. The cherubim were carved into the wood.

Two faces. The cherubim show only two faces, not four as seen earlier in Ezek 1:10 and 10:14, 21, because here the medium of carved relief entails three-dimensional projection onto a two-dimensional plane. One spatial axis is necessarily omitted. Consult Block (1998, 558) and Tuell (2009, 292).

41:20. *Above door height.* The LXX has the carvings go all the way to the ceiling ("coffering"; cf. NLT), but the temple's wood paneling does not extend that far (see Note *Frame the windows* on 41:16). I am omitting the final phrase in the MT "and the wall of the temple," about which the Masoretes expressed reservations through special marks (*puncta extraordinaria*).

41:21. *Main hall . . . [Most] Holy Place.* The *hêkāl* is the temple's main hall/nave; the *qōdeš*/"Holy Place" is the inner sanctum (cf. v. 23).

Four-sided doorposts. The doorposts were "square," as the MT puts it, in the sense of being rectangular, as asserted in the *Meṣudat David.* The specification, which otherwise would seem an obvious and unnecessary comment, surely intends to contrast with 1 Kgs 6:31, 33, where the main hall and the inner sanctuary have differing four-sided and five-sided doorposts. Especially in its holiest, inner areas, Ezekiel's temple emphasizes four-sided, "square" shapes, which signify the Holy (see Comments on 40:47–41:4).

41:22. *Altar table.* The reader first thinks of an incense altar, but the subsequent text and the guide's explanatory comment point in another direction. The emphasis is on a *wooden* furnishing, which turns out to be a table (see the Targum and Rashi; Rashi even envisions the table having legs). Wood, which is flammable, is rather dangerous for incense burning. Ezekiel is describing the table for the "bread of the Presence," referencing Lev 24:6 (HS).

Was wood. On the nonverbal syntax of the verse, see *GKC* sec. 141b.2(a): "the altar (was) wood . . . , and the walls thereof (were) wood." Whereas the table for the bread in the PT source was overlaid completely with gold (Exod 25:24), Ezekiel's table leaves its wood exposed. In Ezekiel's temple, geometric symbols of holiness trump precious metals in signifying God's presence. In addition, Ezekiel here emphasizes the table in HS for the bread, not the one in PT. Against the NRSV, NIV, and NABR, HS describes the table in Lev 24:6 not as "pure gold" but simply as "pure" (NET: "ceremonially pure").

3 ½ feet square. Some text may have dropped out of the MT because of homoioteleuton; the LXX reads, "Its height, three cubits, and its length, two cubits, and its width, two cubits, and it had horns, and its base and its walls were wooden." Whereas the preexilic table for the bread was rectangular (Exod 25:23), Ezekiel's table is square, again symbolizing ideal holiness. It is also much taller—a full 3 feet taller—aligning with other temple proportions signaling God's towering presence within the complex.

Corners, base. The LXX understands "corners" to refer to altar horns. Perhaps the corners' resemblance to such horns was what prompted Ezekiel to use the term *mizbēaḥ* (altar) at the start of the verse. The reading "base" in the LXX is adopted here, as it is intelligible over against the MT's reading "length."

41:23. *Folding accordion doors.* This amplified rendering (paraphrase) aims to clarify the MT's reference to "double doors," which I find ambiguous and confusing.

41:24. *Folding pair of panels . . . hinged leaves.* The difficult Hebrew, which uses the same word for "partition," "door," "panel," and "leaf," literally speaks of "two swinging/folding/hinged leaves for each [of the doorway's two doors]" (NRSV, NIV). First Kings 6:32–34 supplied Ezekiel with the basic idea of swinging leaves (see fig. 7, inset, location C). Because Ezekiel repeats three times that each partition's two doors had a set of leaves, he invites us to imagine how these sets of panels move or swing in relation to each other. Most likely, in each partition all four leaves occupy a single plane, a hinged pair to the left and a hinged pair to the right (see the figure just cited). For three other interpretations of the doorways' configuration, see figure 15 in Milgrom (2012, 96). Milgrom has no remarks on the figure, but all three interpretations entail sets of hinged doors creating a sort of "airlock" between the rooms of the temple building.

41:25. *Lintel-beam.* The specialized architectural sense of the Hebrew terminology is unknown, so I follow the Targum's understanding that some sort of lintel is at issue (see fig. 7, location D). Milgrom (2012, 96) also thinks of a thick supporting beam or lintel, following Radak (cf. Rashi on 1 Kgs 7:6). The NIV imagines something even larger than a thick beam, a "wooden overhang" on the porch's front (cf. NRSV, NET: "canopy of wood").

41:26. *Side chambers.* On the three-story annex of side chambers, which was attached to the sides and rear of the temple building, see Ezek 41:5–7.

Lintels. The ambiguous text and syntax of the MT could possibly suggest that the lintel over the porch entrance had windows and palm trees (cf. CEB, ESV)! This is really unlikely, however, and the MT actually refers to "lintel-beams" in the plural. Thus, the reference is probably to the north and south doors of the annexed side chambers (see 41:11) having prominent wooden lintels or overhangs/canopies (cf. NIV, NLT).

Comments

Having described the temple building and its annexes, Ezekiel now doubles back to describe interior decorations and structures. Redaction critics may suspect that an editor, perhaps the prophet himself, has here fleshed out the earlier description in 40:48–41:4. Against Zimmerli (1983, 387), however, the singling out of what is thematically significant (e.g., cherubim, the table in v. 22, the lintel in v. 25) speaks against pragmatic building concerns as the editorial motivation. As Duguid (1999, 477) notes, the text

passes over the preexilic shrine's gourd and flower motifs to highlight spiritually weighty symbols.

The present canonical form of the text invites the reader to assume that Ezekiel is simply recalling details that he observed earlier and narrated in 40:48–41:4. Working from memory, the prophet is tying up loose ends and emphasizing particularly rich archetypes. The guide is offstage, and the quotation in v. 22 of his statement about the table of the bread likely recalls what was said around the time of the quotation in 41:4.

The decoration of Ezekiel's temple departs markedly from Solomon's golden interior of 1 Kings 6. As elsewhere, the temple's beauty is expressed in geometry, not in bullion. The term "gold," in fact, is actually absent in Ezekiel 40–48. Is this a cue that God's physical presence is infinitely more precious than gleaming metal (see Ezek 7:19)?

Key preexilic furnishings, such as the ark of the covenant and the golden lampstand, are remarkably absent. This has nothing to do with the contingencies of Israel's history, in which enemies plundered such items. As Joyce (2007a, 224–25) aptly notes, a visionary utopia, especially one "so bold in other respects," is clearly not constrained by such contingencies. Rather, as Kasher (1998, 192–98) astutely observes, iconographic representations of God's presence such as arks and menorahs are superfluous in a highly anthropomorphic vision of God's bodily occupation of the temple (see 43:5). Kasher's insight relates directly to what I wrote above about Ezekiel's "naked" architecture pointing the reader toward a living, embodied Presence indwelling the temple building.

Instead of gold overlay, Ezekiel's interior has intricately framed windows and carved paneling with composite beings guarding God's sacred realm. Cherubim on the main hall's doors (41:25) and perched above the adytum's portal (41:17–18) inspire fear and awe. No fool, swaggering with arrogance, dare breach the cosmic center. Genesis 3:24, with its sword-wielding cherubs, illustrates the fierce guards that these creatures could be.

Ezekiel's God still needs cherub guards, like those on the cella's curtain in the tabernacle and on the doors to the adytum of Solomon's temple (1 Kgs 6:31–32). According to 2 Chr 3:14, Solomon even added a cherubim-embroidered veil to the wood doors already sealing the Holy of Holies. A double barrier protecting the room was in no way considered excessive. The continuing presence of cherub iconography reminds us that Ezekiel is writing about a utopia, not about realized eschatology. In Ezekiel 40–48 hubris is still of concern; the Holy is still lethal.

Parallel imagery of monstrous, guardian beings positioned about a cosmic center is common both in the ancient Near East and in world cultures. In this sacred imagination, the cosmic axis often appears as a stylized tree, which marks God's paradise and earth's navel (Gen 2:9, 17; 3:3–7, 11). Ezekiel was well aware of the cosmic-tree archetype, employing it to critique Egypt in Ezekiel 31. Ezekiel also knew cherubic symbolism thoroughly, as emerges in his judgment of Tyre in 28:11–19 (Cook 2004b).

A cylinder seal from northern Syria (Alalakh level I–II, 1225–1175 BCE) shows seated sphinxes flanking a sacred tree, paws raised as a shield against encroachers. Two ram-headed sphinxes mirror each other across a palm tree on an ivory carving from Arslan Tash (ninth to seventh century BCE; Barnett 1982, 48, plate 47b; Bodi 2009, 493). Antithetical sphinxes, from about the same time, also appear on an ivory panel from Nimrud. They flank the same voluted tree, which rises heavenward in tiers. As

in Ezekiel's temple, there is a patterned alternation of sphinxes and sacred trees (Cook 2004b, 180; Mallowan 1966, vol. 2, fig. 477; Barnett 1982, plate 49e).

From farther west, sphinxes guard the cosmic center on five cast plaques from Mycenaean Cyprus (twelfth to early eleventh century BCE). The plaques form part of a tripod's ring-shaped top. On each, sphinxes sit upright arrayed about a stylized, lilylike tree. They wear round helmets with knobs and plumes (Catling 1964, plate 29c, d, e and pp. 196–97; also cf. plate 35a and plate 36a; Bloch-Smith 2002, 86; Cook 2004b, 180).

The temple at ʿAin Dara northwest of Aleppo (tenth to eighth centuries BCE), described above, provides superb examples of winged sphinxes guarding its entrance. The Mari investiture panel (ca. 1778–1758 BCE) shows three pairs of composite creatures guarding the cosmic tree (see fig. 4, location B). Some place a foot upon the tree, identifying themselves with it.

In his visions of God's chariot in Ezekiel 1 and 10, the prophet sees four cherubim in agitated, frenetic motion and three-dimensional array: "The creatures flashed back and forth like strikes of lightning" (1:15 MESSAGE). Mirroring and balancing each other across the cosmic center, they form Carl Jung's stable quaternity pattern, described above (see Comments to 40:47–41:4). In the utopian temple the cherubim appear in two-dimensional relief, momentarily frozen in place with only two faces showing. Why single out the human and lion faces?

The human face emphasizes insight, wisdom, and rationality. Like a guardian sphinx, Ezekiel's cherubim are surely highly intelligent and clever. The fierce lion face, in contrast, warned encroachers to back off lest mayhem break loose (cf. Gen 49:9, Ps 22:13). Here is negative and lethal numinous power. The temple at Tell Tayinat had column bases on its front portico in the form of lions (see Image referenced in Note *Column on each side* on 40:49 [see Appendix]). At the ʿAin Dara temple, colossal lions flanked the temple stairs alongside cherubim.

As mentioned above, Ezek 28:11–19 employs a mythic story condemning the violent outbreak of a cherub whom God had trusted "as guardian" in Eden, a "living creature with outstretched wings" (28:14 NJB). Ezekiel was ingenious to use cherubic imagery in critiquing Tyre, since Tyrian royalty conceived of itself in this manner (see Cook 2004b, 193 n. 48; Barnett 1982, plate 51), apparently unaware of or unconcerned about a cherub's dangerous, dark potential. Ezekiel, however, knew the vulnerabilities of cherubim. Their tensive equilibrium about the cosmic center might fail at one or another quaternity point. Carl Jung notes how such a fallen point can become "demonic in the worst sense" (Cook 2004b, 194). The cherub's animal face can wrest control!

Unlike at Tell Tayinat and ʿAin Dara, no guardian monsters appear lower down in outer, secondary-tier precincts of Ezekiel's utopian temple complex. Cherubim do not even guard the temple building's porch or side chambers on the priestly terrace. Only windows, palm trees, and lintels are found there (41:26). This is in keeping with Ezekiel's heightened emphasis on stepped gradations of holiness. Ezekiel's cherubim guard the more recessed, holier sections of his temple complex. By way of contrast, the preexilic temple had cherubim visible out in the courtyard (on movable washstands, 1 Kgs 7:29, 36; Keel 1978, 140–42, fig. 188).

The palm trees adorning the walls of the outer gatehouses (Ezek 40:16, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37) were trees of lower-tier significance compared with the cherub-guarded trees that Ezekiel now describes. As noted in the discussion of Ezekiel 40, the outermost trees

of the temple signal an initial entrance into a divine garden. The Mari panel depicts such trees at the far left and right of the investiture scene (see the outer trees, labeled *1,* in the side panels of the scene of fig. 4). Now, in chapter 41, Ezekiel views a more central, sacred tree: the cosmic tree (*Weltbaum*). This is the tree labeled *2* in the Mari investiture panel. (The twin trees in the image, of course, are one and the same in the mythic-poetic symbolism of the panel.) Its guardian cherubim and stylized appearance signal its cosmic stature. The circular blossoms or orbs atop the tree likely represent celestial spheres, stars and planets. With its stubby branches at regularly spaced intervals, it parallels the voluted tree in the panel from Nimrud that likewise rises heavenward in tiers (Barnett 1982, plate 49e).

Verse 22 introduces a single, lone furnishing within the temple building: a square, singularly tall wooden table for the bread of the Presence (see Notes *Altar table* and *Was wood* on 41:22). What is this table's significance? Other furnishings present in Solomon's temple are absent or unmentioned, even the ark of the covenant. The guide's declaration "This is the table that stands before the Lord" grants this unique table prominence. Its status must be akin to that of the inner sanctum, of which the guide declared, "This is the Most Holy Place" (41:4).

From the time of Targum Jonathan, Jewish tradition has emphasized that the unique furnishing in Ezek 41:22 is a *table,* a family fixture akin to a dining room table in a home. Here, the Talmud states, one shares food and practices charity (b. Ber. 55a). Much earlier, the Zadokites had taken particular interest in the same table. They single it out as a "pure" furnishing (Lev 24:6 HS), an expression that is absent in PT, which instead points out its pure gold overlay (see Note *Was wood* on 41:22). They expand PT's description of how to set the table (Exod 25:23–30), specifying exactly how food should be presented "before the Lord" (Lev 24:5–9). They add notes about the priests' consumption of the bread and the covenantal character of the meal.

Ezekiel 41:22 draws on the Zadokite language of HS in Leviticus 24, repeating the expression about the table being "before the Lord"—an expression that is used twice by HS in Lev 24:5–9 (contra NRSV) but is absent in PT's description. Anthropomorphic language of God powerfully distinguishes HS/Zadokite texts from PT/Aaronide texts. Again evincing anthropomorphic theology, Ezekiel is doubtless emphasizing the ideal *table fellowship* that God and Israel should enjoy together in a utopian setting.

The Presence, the *kĕbôd YHWH,* is soon returning bodily to the temple (43:1–12). The Lord's dining table must be set! Ezekiel's surprising specification of the table's height brings it into three-dimensional space, allowing the reader to imagine real bread there. That this height is 3 feet taller than in PT points to an expectation of a realistic towering Presence about to arrive (see Note *3 ½ feet square* on 41:22). When the prophet earlier noted the height of tables, sacrificial meat was laid on them (40:42–43). Ezekiel will soon give the height of the altar of burned offerings out in the altar yard (43:14b–15a). There too, we immediately read about actual offerings (43:18). Thus, I agree with Milgrom (2012, 95) in his claim that here in the temple's main hall and out in the altar square, "bread is on the table and sacrifices are on the altar," ready for God's appearance.

Ezekiel's elaboration on temple decorations and furnishings ends in 41:23–26 with notes about two unique accordion doorways, more cherubim and palm trees on the main hall's doors, and three prominent lintel-beams or wooden canopies atop the

south, east, and north entranceways of the temple structure. Talk of lintels, porch sidewalls, and doorways folded open focuses the reader on the path of entrée into the temple building. The pathway is open, ready for the return of the Presence, the *kĕbôd YHWH,* in 43:1–12.

I find intriguing the CEB's rendering of v. 25—"A single luxuriant tree stood outside, in front of the [temple's] porch"—despite its fragile character. I do not think Ezekiel saw a literal tree at the porch front, although the evidence of the Mari investiture panel allows for the possibility. The panel's outer set of palm trees seem based on an actual life-size tree in the "Court of the Palm" in Zimri-Lim's palace (Bradshaw and Head 2013, 7, 9, fig. 9). Instead, the CEB translation nicely reveals the suggestive diction of v. 25; it illuminates how the verse may evoke a palm image.

The term *ʿāb* (lintel, canopy) in v. 25 is homonymous with *ʿāb* (cloud, mass, dense growth), and *ʿēṣ* can mean "tree" as well as "wood." Thus, the phrase *ʿob ʿēṣ* in 41:25 can indeed evoke for the reader some such image as enwrapping tree foliage. Ezekiel may thus have expected some, or many, readers to associate the large wooden lintels or wood canopies atop the entrances to the temple building with projecting upper branches of huge, luxuriant shade trees.

Trees, by virtue of their foliage, may conceal that before which they form a hedge. Jewish legend tells of how the foliage of Eden's tree of knowledge (the cosmic tree) hid the tree of life from direct view. Access to the tree of life is only via "a path . . . through the tree of knowledge" (Ginzberg 1913–1938, vol. 1, 70). The journey is worthwhile, for from beneath the tree of life "flows the water that irrigates the whole earth" (vol. 1, 70; see also vol. 5, 91 n. 50).

Ezekiel has not yet encountered the tree of life, but he will. Ezekiel 47:2 will introduce it in an allusion to vases flowing with water like those in the bottom central frame of the Mari panel. The trees of life (labeled *3* in fig. 4) sprout from the goddesses' jugs. As in the palace and shrine of Zimri-Lim, in Ezekiel's temple "trees"—the *ʿāb* (lintel, canopy) and the cherub-guarded "cosmic" trees of 41:18, 25—symbolically shield the divine source of life in the heart of the building, in the adytum.

The Priests' Chambers (42:1–14)

42 [1]Then he led me out, by way of the northern [inner gatehouse], into the [compound's] outer courtyard. He brought me [westward] to the [sacristy] chambers nudged up against the [north side of the] yard [that lay around the temple building] and against the north side of the [west] building. [2][The sacristy's] façade [running west to east] at the north flank [of the sacristy complex] was 175 feet long. The [north-south] width of the complex was 87 ½ feet. [3]Tiered, terraced rows of rooms faced each other in the three-storied complex. [On one side] they overlooked the 35-foot-wide inner yard area [that lies just north of the temple building] and, [on the other side, and looking farther away, they overlooked] the paved walkway of the outer courtyard[']s perimeter]. [4]Between the rows of chambers was an interior corridor 17 ½ feet wide. It ran the [entire] 175-foot length of [that particular] block of chambers whose doors faced north. [5]Each of the [two] upper levels of chambers was narrower than the level beneath, due to a tiered construction that incrementally took away space from in front of them, [6]for they had a three-level[, terraced] structure, not a [straight-front,] pillared one as found in the courtyards. From the ground floor up, the rows of chambers were incrementally set back [with no columns for either show or support]. [7]There was a [freestanding] wall outside, projecting [laterally eastward] from those chambers that were near the outer courtyard, adding length to the façade [on the northern sacristy]. It was 87 ½ feet long. [8][It was needed,] since the chambers on the outer courtyard side were [only] 87 ½ feet long, while the [facing block of sacristy] chambers that were near the temple building were 175 feet long. [9]The chamber complex had an eastern entrance at its foot that accessed the courtyard space outside [the sacristy precinct—that is, the area just west of the northern gatehouse to the inner courtyard]. [10][The entrance was aligned] with the start of the [extension] wall.

On the south side [of the temple compound], nudged up against the yard [behind the temple building] and against the [west] building, was a [duplicate complex of sacristy] chambers, [11]with a [duplicate] passageway out front [between the two facing

blocks]. The chambers looked just like the ones on the north side, with the same length, width, and exits. The dimensions and doorways mirrored each other. [12][Accordingly,] one accessed the southern chambers from the east, using an entry at the head of a corridor that ran parallel to the [complex's freestanding extension] wall.

[13]Then he said to me, "As for the north and south chambers nudged up against the [rear] yard, they are the [priests'] holy chambers. *There* the priests who draw near to the LORD shall eat the most holy sacrifices. *There* they shall place the most holy sacrifices—the grain offering, the purification offering, and the reparation offering. The place is holy. [14]Once the priests enter [the inner precincts], they must not go out again from the holy area into the outer court without placing *there,* [in the sacristies,] the liturgical vestments in which they officiate, for these clothes are holy. They must put on other clothes before entering the area open to the public."

Notes

42:1. *[Sacristy] chambers.* Other chambers for use by lay worshipers were introduced to the reader in 40:17, and smallish priestly barracks were described in 40:44–46, but these larger, architecturally complex chambers are different. They are sacristies, for storing the priests' share of offerings (44:29–30), eating the most holy sacrifices (42:13), and depositing holy vestments (42:14). From his vantage in the outer courtyard, Ezekiel can see the chambers, but he cannot get to them (see fig. 2, location X; consult Block 1998, 509, fig. 2, location 11). In contrast to many reconstructions (see CEB on 42:1, and on 42:9 see NJPS, CEB, NJB, Block 1998, 562; cf. Milgrom 2012, 67), we should *not* envision any direct passage from the outer court into the sacristies (see NOTE *North flank* on 42:2 and NOTE *Courtyard space outside* on 42:9). The LXX's rendering of 42:1, "he brought me into the [sacristy] area," supposes that Ezekiel must have physically toured the area and seen its details. The Hebrew, however, can have the sense "bring near" (see Gen 2:19, 43:9; Lev 24:11; Jer 32:42) as well as "bring inside," and for reasons elaborated below, a door at this locale is unlikely. As at 41:3–4, Ezekiel describes what he does not actually visit.

Nudged up against. Ezekiel came to a group of rooms immediately "against"/"adjacent to" (*neged*) the north perimeter of the yard (the *munnāḥ;* see fig. 2, inset, location S) around the temple building (see fig. 2, location T). To speak of these rooms as "opposite" the yard, as almost every modern English translation does, is ambiguous and confusing.

Yard [that lay around the temple building]. The term "yard," as earlier in 41:12, is the same "open area" of 41:10, which is 35 feet wide around the temple building on its back three sides. See my translation of Ezek 41:9–10 and figure 2, inset, location S.

North side of the [west] building. Ezekiel 41:12 introduced the large building behind the temple, backed up against the western wall of the temple complex (see fig. 2, location U).

42:2. *Façade.* The MT is cryptic and likely corrupt at the start of the verse, but NJPS and CEB capture the likely sense. (Also consult NJB, which is close to the Targum here.) A freestanding wall (v. 7) extends the length of the façade of the north sacristy to a full 175 feet (see IMAGE: https://goo.gl/Q7RZYa and v. 8 below). Being

directly west of the inner gatehouses and matching their elevation, the sacristies lie on the same priestly terrace as the square altar yard (contrast Milgrom 2012, 43, 99, whose opaque discussion parallels Duguid 1999, 477, and the NIV at 42:9). The outer face of the terrace and the façade atop it separate the sacristies from the temple complex's outer courtyard. As noted above, there is no entrance from the outer courtyard at the end of the façade, just an entrance from the altar yard and from the washing room annexed to the north inner gatehouse. (See the Image referenced in Note *Annex* on 40:38 [see Appendix]; and Note *Courtyard space outside* on 42:9.)

North flank. Like the NRSV, NABR, NJB, and NET, I emend *petaḥ* to *pĕʾat* (with *pēʾâ* meaning "border" here), following the reference to a "divider" or "partition" at the end of 42:1 in the LXX.

Width of the complex was 87 ½ feet. The measurements of v. 2 make the north sacristy complex a perfect half square. Taken together with the mirroring south sacristy complex (42:10–12), the two combined sacristy complexes are an ideal square of 100 cubits per side—a symbol of perfect holiness.

42:3. *Tiered, terraced rows.* See the Image referenced in Note *Façade* on 42:2 (see Appendix). For more details on the "tiered, terraced" nature of the sacristy complex, see v. 6 below.

35-foot-wide. The MT has "twenty [cubits]," with the Hebrew term "cubits" elided but understood.

Inner yard area. The yard area of the inner courtyard in mind here was first detailed in 41:9–10 (see Note *Yard [that lay around the temple building]* on 42:1). Although the Hebrew speaks of the "inner courtyard," the focus is on a smaller zone, just as 42:9 will speak of an "outer courtyard" in focusing on a small zone between the sacristies and the northern inner gate tower (see Note *Courtyard space outside* on 42:9).

Paved walkway. The paved walkway circumscribing the outer courtyard was introduced in 40:17–18 (see Note *Lower Walkway* on 40:18 and fig. 2, location C).

42:4. *175-foot length.* On this length, see v. 2. The MT reads "toward one cubit" (i.e., 1 ¾ feet), which is obscure syntax and suggests a dimension too narrow for a walkway (yet, it is taken as a dimension of width in the CEB, NJPS, and Milgrom's translation [2012, 198]). I follow the LXX and the Syriac, which both speak of a "length" of "one hundred cubits" (175 feet). See the Image referenced in Note *Façade* on 42:2 (see Appendix).

Block of chambers whose doors faced north. The end of v. 4 is most intelligible if it specifically references the particular, extended row of chambers on the corridor's south side (see the Image referenced in Note *Façade* on 42:2 [see Appendix]), a row 175 feet long facing north. The northern row of chambers was shorter than this (see the discussion of 42:8 below).

42:5. *Incrementally took away space.* The Hebrew text is difficult here. Radak writes that only Elijah is destined to explain this verse! See the Images in preceding notes for a reconstruction of the sacristies' tiered, terraced rows of rooms.

42:7. *[Freestanding] wall.* See Note *Façade* on 42:2, and notice the contrast with Block's very different placement of this wall and of the corridor (42:12) that runs parallel to it (Block 1998, 509, fig. 2; 565, fig. 6; 566). Just as the priestly duties inside the annex of side chambers were hidden from public view (see Comments on 41:5–15a

and the emphasis on *interior* stairs), so this wall screens the priests' work of preparing food and cleaning up. Worshipers in the outer courtyard must remain focused on the sacrificial rites in the inner gatehouse porches and on the square altar yard.

42:8. *175 feet long.* The measurement of 175 feet for the length of the sacristy complex was given already in 42:2, where this façade is first referenced. My paraphrase, accomplished by adding the material in brackets in v. 8, gives a sense close to that in the NLT: "This wall added length to the outer block of rooms, which extended for only 87 ½ feet, while the inner block—the rooms toward the Temple—extended for 175 feet."

42:9. *Eastern entrance at its foot.* For the location of the eastern entrance to the sacristy complex and its access to the small courtyard space on the inner terrace of the temple complex behind the room for washing sacrifices (40:38), see the Image referenced in Note *Annex* on 40:38 (see Appendix). Almost all English translations give the wrong impression when they refer to a direct entrance from the temple's *outer* courtyard into the priests' chambers. The CEB, for example, has, "These chambers were entered from the outer courtyard at the end of the courtyard wall, because the entrance was at the end of the chambers at the east." Diagrams of the temple complex are often similarly mistaken (e.g., Cooke 1936, fig. 2, location V; Stevenson 1996, 29, fig. 3, location E; Milgrom 2012, 42, fig. 1). Some translations of 42:2 (e.g., KJV, NIV, CEB) refer to a north door to the sacristy complex, but the MT requires emendation here (see Note *North flank* on 42:2, NRSV, NJPS, NABR). (On the implication of a north sacristy entrance in the LXX of 42:1, see Note *[Sacristy chambers]* on that verse.) It defies common sense to have a simple side entrance—an unlocked back door—to a restricted priestly inner courtyard that is otherwise protected by three massive gate towers. A direct entrée from the outer courtyard into chambers lining the inner court did not exist even in the preexilic temple. Ezekiel had to *dig* into these chambers (8:8a). The entrance of 42:9 (cf. 8:8b) actually leads onto an area on the same raised terrace as the altar, an area that is "outer" only with respect to the walled sacristy precinct itself.

Courtyard space outside. The "courtyard space" in question is on the west side of the northern inner gateway, since 46:19 refers to the entrance as "flanking" the gate (literally, at its "shoulder"; cf. the diction in 40:18, 41). The term "court" applies to such smaller areas elsewhere in 40:47, 42:3, and 46:21–22. Of course, the priests have to pass this way when exiting to the outer courtyard (42:14, 44:19). Conceivably, that could also be what is meant here. In either case, having pathways and entrances that are entirely up on the raised inner terrace gives the priests a route isolated from laypeople where they can process their share of sacrifices received up in the inner gatehouses, move them to their kitchens, and eat them in their sacristies (see 42:13–14). In Ezekiel's spatial program of tiered holiness, the laity in the outer courtyard must never be exposed to priests traveling about in sacred vestments bearing most holy sacrifices (see 46:20).

42:10. *[Aligned] with the start.* Here I am reading "beginning" or "head" on the basis of the LXX. (The MT reads "in the thickness of the wall.") Note that the entrance is in the eastern wall of the sacristy area, not in the "freestanding wall" of 42:7. Ezekiel 46:19 refers to the entrance as "flanking" the gate (literally, at its "shoulder"; cf. the diction in 40:18, 41). The dimensions given in 42:7–8 describe a wall that is not cut short

by an opening but extends from the north sacristy block a full 87 ½ feet (see the Image referenced in Note *Façade* on 42:2 [see Appendix]).

South. Here I am following the LXX rather than the MT's "east." Verse 12 confirms that the duplicate chambers are on the temple's south side (see fig. 2, location Y).

42:12. *Corridor.* This corridor duplicates the northern one described in v. 4. As the NLT puts it in v. 11, "There was a walkway between the two blocks of [sacristy] rooms just like the complex on the north side of the Temple."

Parallel to. The Hebrew phrase "in front of" seems here to mean "along" (NJPS) or "parallel to" (NIV). Compare the use of *lipnê* at the start of v. 4. The corridor runs east to west, parallel to the outer extension wall of the sacristy complex.

Wall. A noun in apposition to the term "wall" occurs in the verse, but it is a *hapax legomenon* of unclear meaning. I assume that this wall corresponds to the one in v. 7, which added length to the façade separating the northern sacristy chambers from the outer courtyard. Several translations speak of a "matching" wall (NRSV, NJPS). Alternatively, the Hebrew root may indicate an "enclosing" or "protecting" wall (see *HALOT;* NABR: "protective wall").

42:13. *Draw near.* The adjective "near" is from Lev 10:3. The HS source narrows the circle of priests who have access to God's innermost sacred spaces beyond other traditions (such as Deuteronomy). However, the LXX of 42:13 is wrong in adding a textual plus limiting access exclusively to the Zadokites. O'Hare (2010, 79) is likely mistaken about the LXX *Vorlage* already having the plus. Both Zadokites and Aaronides, but not Levites, may "draw near" to serve God in the restricted shrine area (Num 18:3, 7). Ezekiel 45:4 includes both Zadokites and Aaronides as priests who may "draw near" in this manner. In contrast to PT, Ezekiel gives only Zadokites altar duties (40:46, 43:19, 44:15).

Most holy sacrifices. On these offerings, specially valued by the Zadokites in HS and Ezekiel, see Note *Entirely burned offering* on 40:38. Ezekiel takes the special diction from HS (see Lev 6:17 [MT 6:10], Num 18:10). The same language of "most holy sacrifices" occurs again in Ezek 44:13.

Grain . . . purification . . . reparation offering. HS at both Num 18:8–10 and Lev 6:17–18 (MT 6:10–11) has the same triad of most holy sacrifices. Earlier in Ezek 40:39, where the focus was on tables for butchering, the entirely burned offering was named instead of the grain offering. Grain offerings, which the priests could consume, could be substituted for animals for the entirely burned offering. The context here has stipulated naming those offerings that priests could eat or store in their sacristies.

42:14. *These clothes are holy.* Contagious holiness, contacted in an unguarded, direct manner, is dangerous and harmful, as explicitly stated in 44:19 and 46:20.

Comments

Having finished measuring the great west building of the temple complex (41:15a), the guide now leads Ezekiel away from the compound's central areas, out through the inner courtyard's north gate tower. The pair enter the outer courtyard, but their purpose is not to view peripheral areas and structures. Rather, they proceed west to a point where Ezekiel can look back up into the inner courtyard again and see the north set of the priests' holy sacristy chambers (see fig. 2, location X).

Although the prophet does not physically visit the north and south sacristies at this time, he takes the reader on an imaginative tour through both complexes, giving a detailed and convincing description. Verses 1b–10a cover the northern chambers, and vv. 10b–12 cover their southern twins (see fig. 2, location Y). Without specifically mentioning the temple building, the tour passes by it again, moving through its rear yard on the way to the south sacristies.

This is not the first time that the tour has doubled back on itself. In commenting on Ezek 40:19, 24, where Ezekiel first visits the outer gatehouses, Rashi notes that in order for the guide to show Ezekiel the southern gate, he had to turn around and retrace his steps. Leaving the north gate, he led the prophet back to the east gate and around to the south. The most glaring repeat movement will occur in 43:5 and 44:4. By the time the temple tour is fully completed at 46:24, Ezekiel travels from outside the complex to its center and then back out again twice (see Duguid 1999, 520 n. 16). Then in Ezekiel 47 he travels back to the center and then back outside the complex yet again!

Rather than receiving an efficient guided tour, readers of Ezekiel 40–48, in its present, canonical form, meander with Ezekiel on an imaginative, literary journey circumambulating a sacred center. As readers travel in toward the adytum, then out through the northern gate tower, pass into outer, public space, and then back inside restricted zones once more, arcing across the priestly terrace, the text becomes a devotional exercise, a miniature spiritual pilgrimage. It becomes an exercise of moving through a sacred labyrinth, of concentrating and meditating on an archetypal mandala.

Credit accrues to Susan Niditch (1986) for her insight comparing Ezekiel's utopian temple with the mandalas of Buddhist visionaries. Meditation and concentration on such mandalas lead the believer into a numinous world of divine gates, city squares, and living quarters. As Niditch (213) writes, "The association of visionary experience with a detailed architectural plan in the Buddhist tradition provides a fascinating analogue helping one to appreciate a similar association in Ezekiel." In touring the mandala, one not only views God's city but also participates in world *re*-creation and personal growth.

As Carvalho (1992, 184) notes, unlike all comparable Israelite and Babylonian temple accounts, Ezekiel 40–48 is an "existential reality" that one "walks through." It is a temple "never built but eternally existing," which readers experience "textually" (43:10–11). "Once the model became textualized," Carvalho observes, it became (like a mandala) "a source for spiritual contemplation" (189–90).

Treating the prophet's utopian temple as a mandala fits extraordinarily well with Zadokite thinking. Just as pride and hubris are root sins for Ezekiel (e.g., 11:3, 24:21), Carl Jung (*CW* 7:404) writes that to circumambulate a mandala is an uncertain journey where overconfidence is completely out of place. One revolves near and around the sacred center, taking the path the mandala represents, hopefully growing in humility and ennoblement along the journey.

The notion of a labyrinth, like that of a mandala, resonates with Zadokite beliefs in the transcendent power of a sacred center. It also meshes well with the belief that such a center generates a latticework of interrelationship. Georges Bataille's studies of the idea of a labyrinth detail several of its qualities that strongly echo Ezekiel's beliefs. For Bataille, a labyrinth differs from a maze-puzzle in having no "solution." Life in the labyrinth is life in relation to that which cannot be specified, pigeonholed, or grabbed

by the tail. Walking a labyrinth is not an effort at mastery, but a journey of immersion in a crisscrossing web of dependent relationships (see Noys 2000, 14).

To circumambulate the labyrinth is to immerse oneself in a matrix of interrelationality. It is to commit to living life in interdependence (Noys 2000, 14). Ezekiel's God, as we have seen, ardently desires such a commitment.

Bernard Tschumi in his study "Questions of Space" (1975) further develops Bataille's characterization of the labyrinth. He also poses a theoretical opposition of labyrinth and pyramid. For Tschumi, the pyramid represents the abstract, the conceptual, the immaterial. This coheres with what we observed earlier about triadic forms, such as the pyramid and ziggurat, symbolizing that which lies above the terrestrial. Ezekiel's ziggurat-shaped altar (43:13–17) marks the temple as a gateway to the Beyond. As opposed to the pyramid, Tschumi understands the labyrinth to represent the tangible, the sensual, the incarnate. Inside the labyrinth, one proceeds on the basis of an immediate sense perception of physical surroundings. All overviews and ideal maps are lacking.

Like a mandala, Ezekiel's temple contains triadic, quadratic, and mazelike features. The circumambulations in 42:1–14, however, prioritize the labyrinthine. Here is a sense-based, embodied experience of a spiritual trust walk. The walk is a pilgrim journey of fulsome living in the here and now, pushing aside any "pyramid," "Egypt" focus on afterlife and mortuary matters. Ezekiel's God is committed to an embodied, palpable indwelling of Israel. Tschumi's labyrinth paradigm illuminates Ezekiel's goal that Israel *live,* not die, and that Israelites live in tangible possession of their Lord (34:30–31).

Ezekiel's temple is certainly labyrinthine in configuration, and as Lethaby (1975, 150) notes, a labyrinth is a space for pilgrimage. It bears repeating, however, that Ezekiel is *not* advocating entering holy precincts in any way other than through literary, vicarious means. Physical encroachment is taboo. Trespassing on holy ground is lethal!

Moral ambiguity lies at the center of a labyrinth's structure. In the classical labyrinth, Lethaby reminds us, a minotaur lurks. Youths from Athens annually die in the maze. The extreme holiness at the center of Ezekiel's utopian temple is similarly alien, amoral, and lethal. This is seen clearly in the present passage in v. 14, which explicitly raises anxiety about the priests' role respecting holy space.

In Zadokite thinking, holiness, like shame, can be both negative and positive. It has a double-edged, Janus nature, which can do great harm and great good. The power of holiness to seep and spread with positive effect is clearest in Zech 14:20–21, where holiness infuses bells worn by horses and every pot in Jerusalem and Judah. If the holiness matrix of Zadokite theology is allowed to do its work, holiness becomes pervasive in Israel. The dynamics of animal sacrifice also illustrate the positive work of holiness. A glance at Haggai 2 shows that sacrificial meat is supposed to be a force in Israel's sanctification (just as in HS texts, such as Exod 29:33; Lev 6:18, 27 [MT 6:11, 20]). Haggai 2:10–13 presupposes the power to sanctify, assuming that holiness is not a mere ethical quality but a dynamic substance that may safely leave the temple in the form of a well-being offering that an Israelite takes home for consumption.

Holiness may travel outside the inner court and contact normal domestic life. Its presence promotes order, life, and well-being (Stevenson 1996, 38). Although this process is not dangerous, holiness does not spread easily or haphazardly. No magical domino effect will make the entire world holy (Hag 2:13). Only a disciplined rule

of life, which emulates holiness both morally and ritually, can ever hope to begin to do that.

The sanctifying power of sacrificial flesh begins when any part of the animal or its blood contacts the temple altar (*pars pro toto*), which occupies the prime "centered square" position of Ezekiel's holy geometry—ground zero (see the first IMAGE referenced in NOTE *Yard* on 40:47 [see Appendix]). "The altar shall be most holy; whatever touches the altar shall become holy" (Exod 29:37; cf. Exod 30:29, Matt 23:19). The meat of offerings that laity consume does not travel into Ezekiel's inner court. The blood and suet (fatty parts) of the animals *do* go up there, however, and are taken directly to the perfectly square altar (Lev 3:3–16, 9:18–20).

There is also a negative holiness, which harms, or even kills, laity who contact it. Priests must exercise extreme diligence in their role as "boundary crossers" for "the well-being of the community" (Nelson 1993, 83–110; Stevenson 1996, xix). For example, Ezekiel emphasizes three times in 42:13–14 that priestly consumption of "the most holy sacrifices," the priests' prebends, as it were, and storage of vestments must occur *šām* (there), *in the sacristies,* and nowhere else. Milgrom (1991, 452) contends that Ezekiel heightens priestly strictures here, since the Torah is silent about taking special care with contagious vestments (also Stevenson 1996, 138).

Ezekiel's priests easily move from sacrifice zones to sacristies without passing through any gate into the outer courtyard (42:9, 11; see NOTE *Eastern entrance at its foot* on 42:9). This is crucial, since the laity in the outer court *must not* contact the most holy sacrifices (see 46:20; Lev 22:14–16 HS). Contrary to Block (1998, 562, 684) and other scholars, the laity in the outer court need never be exposed to sacred vestments or holy sacrifices.

Purification and reparation meat—the priests' prebends—moves directly from gatehouse tables (40:39), past a washing chamber (40:38), and through an east-facing sacristy entrance (42:9) without ever leaving the priestly terrace. (For the choreography, consult Stevenson 1996, 93; Milgrom 2012, 77–78; and Greer 2013, 116–19. Figure 44 in Greer [117] shows sacrificial meat at Tel Dan moving past a washing site to sacristy chambers in a manner just like what Ezekiel envisions.) This reconstruction is definitively confirmed by 46:19, where Ezekiel moves from the altar square (44:4) directly through a sacristy entrance (42:9) that lies *"flanking"* the north inner gatehouse.

The practice of priests having a separate area within sacred precincts to eat their share of sacrifices was traditional in ancient Israel. Archaeological exploration of sacred feasting at Iron Age II Tel Dan attests to the practice (Greer 2013, 89–90, 94–95, 101–2). The evidence confirms the practice of priests receiving special parts of the slaughtered animal. Priests also ate a greater percentage than the general populace of sheep and goats, the animals usually specified for purification and reparation offerings (e.g., Lev 5:6, 15–19; 14:12–21; see NOTE *Most holy sacrifices* on 42:13). The assumption of many scholars since Wellhausen that atoning, expiatory offerings were a late development within Israelite religion now appears quite misguided (Wellhausen 1885, 81; W. R. Smith 1894, 256).

Whereas at Tel Dan there was a simple division between altar clerics and laity, Ezekiel 40–48 with its heightened hierarchy assumes a four-tier system. There are laity and three houses of clerics: the Levites, the (Aaronide) priests, and the sons of Zadok (also tracing descent to Aaron; see 1 Chr 6:1–15 [MT 5:27–41]). Our passage does not

specifically name the Aaronide and Zadokite subdivisions, but a clear bipartite layout of buildings allows for separate cooking and dining zones for two priestly lineages (Ezek 42:13, 46:19–20). Compare Num 18:5a (HS), which distinguishes *mišmeret haqqōdeš,* "care of the sanctuary," and *mišmeret hammizbēaḥ,* "care of the altar." Interestingly, the LXX seems to have missed the fact (see Note *Draw near* on 42:13).

Milgrom (2012, 119) is correct to speak of two priestly groups "completely separated in regard to the location where they dress, eat, and sleep (cf. 40:44–46)." Zadokites and Aaronides, as priests who "draw near" to God (42:13, 45:4), use the sacristies, but not Levites or the laity. Aaronides do not serve at the altar, but they still receive priestly shares of sacrifices (see 44:29–30), just as physically blemished priests do in Lev 21:22 (HS). Though banned from altar service, they are still welcome to the offerings (Milgrom 2012, 147).

The Ezekiel school assumes either that separate priestly lineages will occupy the two zones on a continuing basis or that a contingency plan for bifurcating the priests needs to be in place should the need arise to buttress holiness distinctions in the temple. When bifurcation is in play, the Aaronides likely occupy the southern sacristies, which receive less emphasis in our passage and are farther from the traditional northern zone of sacrificial slaughter (see Note *[Northern inner] gatehouse* on 40:38). This is opposite the orientation of the twin priestly service chambers of Ezek 40:44–46 (see Note *South* on 40:44).

The Measuring Completed (42:15–20)

42 [15]When he had finished taking measurements of what was inside the temple complex, he led me out by way of the eastern [outer] gatehouse and measured [the compound's perimeter] all around [from the outside]. [16][He took his] measuring stick, and he measured the east side as 875 [feet], measured with the stick. Then he turned [17]and measured the north side as 875 feet by his measuring stick. Then he turned [18]to the south side and measured 875 feet by his measuring stick. [19]He turned to the west side and measured 875 feet by the measuring stick. [20]He thus measured [the temple's outside wall] on all four sides. The wall enclosing the compound [formed a square] 875 feet by 875 feet. It separated the holy from the common.

Notes

42:15. *Temple complex.* From this point on, Ezekiel often uses the term *bayit* (house) to refer not to the temple building proper but to the entire compound (see 43:10–12, 21; 44:11, 14; 45:5; 46:24; 48:21).

[Compound's perimeter]. The Hebrew simply reads "he measured it," but as Rashi observes, the antecedent of the pronominal suffix must be *habbayit,* the temple compound. Thus, the LXX repeats the term "house" here.

42:16. *[Took his] measuring stick.* The NABR follows the LXX in omitting the reference to the stick (*qaneh;* NRSV: "reed") here, which is mentioned twice more in the verse and overabundantly in the passage as a whole. The stick first appeared, along with the linen cord (for longer measurements), in 40:3 (see Note *Cord . . . stick* on 40:3 and the Image referenced there [see Appendix]). The laborious use of the stick, rather than the cord, may signal painstaking precision in fixing the perfect squareness of the perimeter. This jibes with the protracted description of the measurement of each individual side in vv. 17–19.

Side. The Hebrew idiom used here to express direction, in which *rûaḥ* (wind) refers to one of the sides of the world, has cosmic connotations (as in 37:9). The diction

reinforces the cosmic and archetypal nature of Ezekiel's temple complex, as well as its expansive valence, that is, its global influence and interaction.

875 [feet]. The MT *ketib* reads "5 cubits," which cannot be correct. Assuming that metathesis has occurred (yielding a mistaken *ʾammâ* [cubit] for *mēʾâ* [hundred]), I read with the *qere* "500 [cubits]," that is, 875 feet. This is supported by the LXX: "[He] measured five hundred by the measuring reed." It also matches the guide's preceding measurements within the temple vision, the figure in 45:2, and the measures named in the LXX over the next three verses (42:17–19). The view has a noble pedigree, including the endorsement of Radak.

Measured with the stick. The Hebrew repeats the word "stick/reed" twice more here, which could be taken as making the text refer to 500 reeds rather than to 500 cubits (both here and in vv. 17, 18, 19). The sense, however, must be "500 [cubits]—[measured in] reeds, by the measuring reed," which fits 45:2 and the general sense of the LXX. There is an ellipsis of *ʾammâ* (cubit), as in 43:16–17, 45:1, and 46:22. Like the LXX, I leave out "[measured in] reeds" (the middle of the three uses of *qaneh*), for smoother English.

Some have understood the guide to be measuring a huge square that is 500 reeds (3,000 cubits, or 5,250 feet) on a side (e.g., Rashi, JPS [1917], KJV, NASB, NKJV). Would the guide not have used the linen cord, rather than the stick, to measure such lengths? Further, such a 500-reed-square walled zone finds no cross-reference elsewhere in Ezekiel 40–48. The temple is 500 cubits (875 feet) on a side, and the outer buffer of empty land that lies around it (45:2) enlarges the sacral compound only by 100 cubits (175 feet) on a side. Moving farther out, there is the district of the priests in 45:3, but it is too large to match (twenty-eight times the area) and it is not square (see fig. 5).

Then he turned. Verse 16 concludes with the adverb *sābîb* (round about), as does the next verse (v. 17). The *BHS* critical apparatus, followed by NRSV, NABR, and NJPS, suggests emending to *sābab* (he turned) and taking this as the start of v. 17 (cf. v. 17 LXX). Verse 19 begins with *sābab* (he turned) in just this manner.

42:17. *By his measuring stick.* The unusual Hebrew syntax again leaves the unit "cubit" unexpressed and twice gives the name of the measuring instrument, the reed/rod. The NJPS comes close to a literal rendering of the verse: "[He] measured the north side: 500 [cubits]—in rods, by the measuring rod."

42:18. *To the south.* Here I am emending *ʾēt* to *ʾel* (to), as in the LXX and at the start of MT v. 19 (as suggested by the *BHS* critical apparatus). For the unexpected jump to the temple's south side, temporarily skipping the west side, see the Comments.

42:20. *875 feet by 875 feet.* At 875 feet on a side, Ezekiel's square temple complex would actually fit within the modern temple mount in Jerusalem. It is a large but realistically sized compound, perhaps more than twice the size of the preexilic temple courts (see the Image referenced in Note *[Northern inner] gatehouse* on 40:38 [see Appendix]), but nowhere near what Rashi calculates to be thirty-six times the original dimensions (see Note *Measured with the stick* on 42:16). The modern temple mount is a trapezoid-shaped platform 1,601 feet along the west, 1,542 feet along the east, 1,033 feet along the north, and 919 feet along the south. Block's (1998, 570 n. 173) figures do not square with this.

Comments

With this passage, the reader comes to a major juncture in the vision. The temple compound has now been surveyed, at least in its main contours. The embodied Presence of the Lord is about to return (43:1–12). To round things off, the guide returns Ezekiel to the outer wall, the place where the survey began at the vision's start, for one final series of measures. The mention of the outer wall explicitly in v. 20 is an intentional rhetorical device, forming an *inclusio* (literary bookend) with the wall's initial introduction in 40:5 (Joyce 2007a, 226). The reader has come full circle and been sufficiently introduced to the temple. The shrine now stands ready to receive the Presence (*kābôd*) of God.

Ezekiel's guide painstakingly measures the sacral compound's perimeter, laboriously moving his 10 ½-foot measuring stick 334 times as he circles the complex. The measuring is exact—the proportions are perfect. He establishes the compound as a huge square of 875 feet (500 cubits) per side. The pronounced emphasis on the 6-cubit-long stick as the measuring implement—with no actual mention of the cubit—helps reinforce the impressive (but realistic) area at issue. The highly repetitious, formulaic rhetoric in vv. 16–19, which is drastically "tightened" in the CEV, GNT, and VOICE paraphrases, drives home both the complex's size and its ideal symmetry.

The perfect square shape of the temple complex mirrors the three central square zones of the raised priestly platform (see Note *Yard* on 40:47), including the easternmost square at the center of the temple complex, with its magnificent square altar right at the complex's center. It mirrors as well the square geometry of the Most Holy Place (41:4), within the second of the square zones. Ezekiel 41:13–15 described this series of three squares, 175 feet (100 cubits) on a side.

Expressed in cubits, 500 by 500 cubits, the numbers in our passage are ideal multiples of twenty-five. The dimensions of the compound signal true holiness (see the Comments on 40:47–41:4). Ezekiel 43:12 will soon confirm the fact: "This is the charter of the temple on top of the mountain: its entire enclosed area is most holy. Look, this is the fundamental charter of the temple." At this major juncture before the return of God's Presence, the vision has resolved the fundamental spiritual problem of disrespecting holiness summarized in Ezek 22:26. The division between holy and profane (Lev 10:10 HS; Ezek 43:12, 44:23, and here in v. 20), however, is not absolute, but graded or tiered. The temple's holiness interacts with the larger world in a regulated, stepped manner. Thus, the temple compound is "most holy" compared with a relative, lower-tier holiness characterizing the surrounding lands.

Our square-centered sanctuary, with its square altar (43:16), square altar yard (40:47), and square outer wall (42:20), is a miniature world in full alignment with God's holiness. But there is more to Ezekiel's geometric design than an internally perfect, walled utopia. In earlier times, the adytum was square but surrounding spaces were not. Now, in Ezekiel 40–48, a configuration of multiple square areas, with squares nested within squares, conveys a sense of God's holiness rippling outward from a cosmic center. This contrasts with Aaronide/PT thought but fits what the Zadokites assume in HS. As Knohl (1995, 185) states, in HS "the holiness of God expands beyond the Sanctuary to encompass the settlements of the entire congregation of Israel, in whose midst God dwells" (also consult Olyan 2000, 121).

Later in Ezekiel 47, readers will witness the flow of life-enhancing sanctity out from the temple in the form of Ezekiel's sacred, cosmic river (see Hals 1989, 338–39). In 45:3–6 and 48:20, readers will discover that the temple, with its internal nested squares, sits within a huge outer zone of perfectly *square* sanctity, 25,000 cubits on a side (see fig. 5). This outer square is highly significant, since it symbolizes how Ezekiel's system of holy concentric squares extends past the outer temple courtyard into the world outside the temple compound, into the "profane" land of Israel itself. The temple's holiness is *not* isolated but is always in dynamic interrelationship with the outer world. Thus, the temple's framing outer wall is not of merely "isolationist" intent but has the sacramental purpose of buttressing a stepped, interactive, expansive holiness.

The order in which Ezekiel presents the dimensions of the temple complex is *not* the expected sequential one. In touring the exterior of a structure, one does not naturally move from the north directly to the south (vv. 17–18). Thus, the LXX and one Hebrew manuscript place v. 18 after v. 19 to give a more logical presentation. According to the MT, Ezekiel appears to purposely pair north and south to create a longitudinal compass axis. The vision has already established the temple's central "holy spine" as an east-west latitudinal axis.

The perpendicular "compass axes" of our passage orient Ezekiel's temple, situating it within a global and cosmic grid. Or, more accurately, Ezekiel's temple, as God's ultimate "compass rose," organizes and orients all other space on earth (Carvalho 1992, 2). This global extension of the temple's orientation and influence is reinforced by the pattern of nested squares outlined above and by language concerning the four cosmic winds. The passage expresses direction using an idiom in which *rûaḥ* (wind) refers to each of the world's great poetic and mythic "sides" (as in 37:9; see Note *Side* on 42:16).

In Ezekiel's Hebrew rhetoric, the temple's four "sides"/*rûḥôt* are actually the world's four "basic winds" or "cardinal directions." Ezekiel's term *rûaḥ* also connotes an extension of influence. Thus, the *rûaḥ* of the cherubim extends outward from their bodies to infuse four wheels representing earth's four corners (Ezek 1:20–21, 10:17; Schäfer 2009, 41). Just as divine life breath flows into the wheels, so also life power from God streams from the temple toward each compass point. As noted earlier, the temple's great west building (41:12) likely symbolizes the storehouse or base camp of God's four winds. In Zech 6:1–8, the Zadokites equate the four *rūḥôt* with God's international chariot force (see Comments on 41:5–15a).

Return of the *Kābôd* of the Lord (43:1–12)

43 [1]Then he brought me [back] to the gatehouse, the [outer] gate facing east. [2]And look, the Presence of the God of Israel coming from the east. Its sound was like the roar of rushing waters; the earth lit up with its dazzling glory. [3]The vision was like what I saw when he came to destroy the city [of Jerusalem], and like the vision I had seen at the Chebar Canal. I fell facedown to the ground. [4]The Presence of the Lord entered the temple compound by the gate facing east. [5]The spirit picked me up and brought me to the inner courtyard; and look, the Presence of the Lord filled the temple building.

[6]I heard someone speaking to me from the temple building, though [the] man was standing beside me. [7]And [the voice] said to me: Human One, this is the place of my throne and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell among the children of Israel continually. The House of Israel will not again defile my holy name, neither they nor their kings, by their adulterous worship and by rites venerating their kings when they die. [8]When they placed their threshold by my threshold, and their doorpost beside my doorpost, with only a wall between us, they defiled my holy name by their abominations that they committed. So I consumed them in my anger. [9]Now, let them remove their adultery and their rites and pillars venerating their dead kings from me, and I will dwell in their midst continually.

[10] As for you, Human One, describe the temple [you have seen] to the House of Israel, so that they will be ashamed of their sins. Let them study the perfection. [11]When they are ashamed of everything they have done, apprise them of the design of the temple and its adornment, its exits and its entrances, and all its regulations and instructions. Write it all down as they watch, so that they may observe its entire design and all its regulations. They must come to terms with them.

[12]This is the charter of the temple on top of the mountain: its entire enclosed area is most holy. Look, this is the fundamental charter of the temple.

Notes

43:2. *Presence.* English translations typically render the Hebrew term *kābôd* as "glory," but in Ezekiel, as Wagner (2012, 284) notes, it is the form in which God presents the divine self directly to the prophet. As argued below in the Comments, for the Zadokites the term represents something close to God's embodied presence on earth. The NJPS translation utilizes the rendering "Presence," which I have adopted here.

Its sound. For the LXX, it is a "sound of the army camp"; compare *maḥăneh* in Ezek 1:24 MT (a plus over against the LXX). In the LXX and MT of 1:24 and 43:2–3, O'Hare (2010, 123–37) observes several such expansions, which he argues are based on developing mystical Merkabah traditions (see Halperin 1988, 57). The LXX of 43:3 actually speaks of "the chariot." O'Hare finds the same developing Merkabah images and diction crystalizing around God's throne-chariot in the Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice at Qumran (see 4Q405 [4QShirShabb^{f}] 20ii, 21–22:6–14). The Qumran texts likely understand the noise of an angelic "army camp" to signal the mustering of troops for apocalyptic battle.

43:3. *He came.* The MT has confused a final *waw* for a *yod,* so that it reads "I came"; compare the NJB, which reads, "This vision was like the one I had seen when I had come for the destruction of the city" (the NJPS is similar). As 9:8 attests, *God* destroyed (*šāḥat*) the city. Although both the LXX and the Peshitta support the MT, it is still mistaken. As Tuell (2009, 300) writes, "Clearly the error is quite old; however, it remains an error." Although the Presence was actually in the city up until its destruction, at the decisive juncture of 586 BCE God exposed the divine self in an epiphany like the one that killed Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10:1–2). That appearance had left Aaron groaning softly (Lev 10:3), just as had happened to the Babylonian exiles when God "came" in 586 (Ezek 27:17, 23–24). According to HS in the next verses (see Lev 10:10), it is just this mortal threat attending the Presence that necessitates distinguishing the Holy from the ordinary.

43:7. *Human One.* Ezekiel has not been addressed as "Human One" since the beginning of the temple vision (40:4). The reappearance of the address helps signal that this passage begins a new phase in the utopian vision of Ezekiel 40–48. Also see v. 10.

Dwell among. The language of God's Presence *dwelling* (literally, "tenting") among the Israelites (both here and in v. 9) is characteristic Zadokite idiom. HS uses this very diction at Exod 25:8, 29:45–46; Num 5:3, 35:34; and Zechariah deploys the idiom at Zech 2:10, 11 and 8:3. Scholars have debated whether the verb *šākan* applied by HS and Ezekiel to God's "dwelling" in God's earthly sanctuary represents something different, perhaps less permanent, than what is conveyed by the verb *yāšab* (settle down, inhabit) in earlier traditions oriented on Zion and Jerusalem's royal theology. Benjamin Sommer (2009, 97), however, mounts a convincing argument against assuming any qualitative difference in the use of the respective verbs: "The former verb [*šākan*] can in fact refer in biblical Hebrew to permanent dwelling: It is modified with adjectives meaning 'forever' . . . in Isaiah 34.17, Jeremiah 7.7, Ezekiel 43.7, Psalm 37.27, and 1 Chronicles 23.25." The Zadokites may have chosen the root *šākan,* instead of *yāšab,* to describe the identity of the Holy as the *tremendum:* that which will always remain unsettled, unnerving, and unsafe. God's presence in the temple should inspire awe in a manner quite different from the presence of an earthly king "inhabiting" (*yāšab*)

a palace (as, e.g., at Pss 9:12, 132:13–14; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 6:2). As Sommer stresses, "the deity's attachment to a particular location is dangerously inappropriate" (120–21). What Tryggve Mettinger (1982, 19–37) has termed the "Zion-Ṣabaoth Theology" is much less careful about the *otherness* of God than HS theology.

Defile my holy name. The HS source in Lev 20:3 speaks of Israel defiling/polluting (*ṭāmēʾ*) God's sanctuary and profaning (*ḥālal*) the holy divine name. Elsewhere, only Lev 21:4 (HS) and Ezekiel's book employ the two verbs, "defile" and "profane," together in this parallel manner (Ezek 23:38). Here, Ezek 43:7–8 chooses just the verb *ṭāmēʾ* of the pair, speaking of defiling God's name in unique wording that differs from the standard Zadokite diction of profaning (*ḥālal*) the name (see Lev 20:3; 21:6; 22:2, 32, all HS; Ezek 20:39, 36:20–23, 39:7). The text may consciously employ *ṭāmēʾ* in this manner as a pointer to Lev 20:3 and that verse's language of contact with death (Molech) causing *sanctuary* defilement (*ṭāmēʾ*). For our passage, intense shrine pollution is associated with the erection of the mortuary memorials about to be referenced (see the discussion below; consult Milgrom 2012, 109). As already argued, the Zadokites' rhetoric of God's name and honor emphasizes that God must act in a manner set by the divine character, not on the basis of how humans make God feel (see Wu 2016, 86). Once God's holiness takes its central place in Israel's midst, people's transformation will be possible. Language of keeping God's name hallowed (Lev 22:32 HS, Ezek 43:7) acknowledges that God, God's self, is holiness, with which the world must align itself if it is to enjoy fulsome life in interrelation with God. For clarification, see Note *My holy name* on 39:7.

Adulterous worship. The term for prostitution, *zĕnût,* here and in v. 9 signals a connection with HS (see Num 14:33). As Knohl (1995, 91) observes, "The root *znh* (Num 14:33) does not appear in PT, but is frequent in HS (Lev 17:7; 19:29; 20:5, 6; 21:9; Num 15:39) and is often used by Ezekiel." Even more significantly, the pairing of *zĕnût* with *peger* in Ezek 43:7, 9 occurs elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible only in HS, in Num 14:33.

Rites venerating their kings. The Hebrew term *peger,* rendered "corpses" in the NRSV, is better understood here, as in HS (Lev 26:30), as a reference to offerings for the dead and the funeral pillars at which they occurred (see REB, NET, VOICE). Devotions and sacrifices for the dead of this nature are attested in Ezekiel's milieu (the "PGR" rites venerating the living-dead known from Mari and Ugarit) and likely occurred in both the preexilic temple and the Garden of Uzza (2 Kgs 21:18, 26). See the Comments.

When they die. I make a slight emendation here, since the MT does not have *bĕmōtām* (when they die) but *bāmôtām* (see ESV). The initial *ā* vowel gives us the noun *bāmâ,* which *HALOT* notes may refer to a cenotaph, a funerary monument. More conjecturally, it may refer to the "back" of the sea dragon (Hab 3:19, Ps 18:34). Going strictly by the MT's *ā* vowel, Israel's kings have profaned God's name by erecting *peger* fixtures "as their cenotaphs," even "upon their Nether-dragon." This possible alternate reading links *peger* rites/stelae with tombs, human remains, and the netherworld. Notably, Ezek 43:7 and Lev 26:30 (HS) are the only two places in the MT where *peger* and *bāmâ* occur together.

43:8. *Threshold . . . doorpost.* Ezekiel is likely referencing a literal passageway from the preexilic palace to the temple (see the royal stairway pictured in the Image

referenced in Note *[Northern inner] gatehouse* on 40:38 [see Appendix]). It is attested by 2 Kgs 16:18, which speaks of an entryway with ornamentation valuable enough to go as tribute to Assyria. Radak sees the same passageway in 1 Kgs 10:5, understanding the verse to refer to an "ascent" connecting palace to temple (as in the ASV, NASB, VOICE, NKJV; cf. NIV note). The reference in 2 Kgs 16:18 to the value of some of its materials helps explain its inclusion among Solomon's splendors. The royal gate of Joash's time likely represents the same entry point (2 Chr 23:20). It was probably also used by the royal officers who emerge from the palace to put Jeremiah on trial in the temple (Jer 26:10; for the "New Gate" mentioned here, see the entrance labeled "Upper Gate" [as in 2 Kgs 15:35] in the Image just referenced).

Only a wall. Ezekiel is again recalling literal fact: Merely a single wall separated the temple compound and palace grounds throughout the monarchic era (see the Image referenced in the preceding note; Carvalho 1992, 11–12, and the bibliography she cites). Palace and temple were so near, a shout in the latter was easily heard in the former (2 Kgs 11:12–13). As the Image shows, the addition of Jehoshaphat's "new court" (2 Chr 20:5; cf. 2 Kgs 21:5; Jer 26:10, 36:10) did nothing to separate temple and palace, the problem about which Ezekiel complains. If the reconstruction is correct, the new court fronts the original temple court on the east side at the "Upper Gate," not on the southern, temple side.

43:10. *Ashamed.* The theme of God's desire that Israel feel shame (*kālam,* v. 10 and v. 11) occurs earlier in Ezek 16:54, 61; 36:32; and 39:26. Judgment here is part of restoration: God does not remove Israel's shame but rather elicits it (Lapsley 2000a, 148; Wu 2016, 119, 130; see Note *Bear their shame* on 39:26). Is this judgment of shame in any sense restorative? Perhaps, if it convinces Israel of its previous fundamentally flawed disposition. The NJB renders 43:10 along these lines: "Describe this Temple to the House of Israel, to shame them out of their loathsome practices." Confirming this interpretation, v. 11 sees observance of God's instruction/torah as the direct result of Israel's new shame. Lapsley makes a reasoned case that in texts such as this, shame provides Israel with catharsis and a corrected self-perception (148). For discussion, consult Wu (120–21).

Perfection. Exodus 25:9 (HS) and 1 Chr 28:19 state that Moses and Solomon built God's tabernacle and temple based on a *tabnît* (pattern, plan) that God gave them. The informed ancient reader would expect Ezekiel's vision to also be a *tabnît,* since he regularly uses HS vocabulary. Instead, v. 10 speaks of *toknît* (proportion, perfection; as in Ezek 28:12). That Ezekiel *has* viewed detailed patterns is confirmed by several appearances of the term *ṣûrâ* (form, design) in v. 11, so why is Ezekiel 40–48 avoiding the term *tabnît,* while also punning on it with the word *toknît*? Stevenson (1996, 17) notes that in both Exodus 25 and 1 Chronicles 28 a *tabnît* is tantamount to a building permit (the term is related to the verb *bnh,* build). Recipients of a *tabnît* have actual shrines to build. Ezekiel's literary temple, in contrast, will not, *and cannot,* be built. The term *ṣûrâ* (v. 11) may help stress that Ezekiel's temple is, instead, an ideal form. This is diction used at Qumran of angelic beings (4QShirShabb^{f} 19:5, 6, 7). Ezekiel's pun on *tabnît,* as Joyce (2007b, 29) argues, may aim at a similar point. Ezekiel has viewed not a mere building plan but the perfect proportions of a real divine archetype. Carvalho (1992, 184) reaches a similar conclusion: "It is expressly not some static plan. . . . It is an existential reality . . . the proto-type . . . the only edifice which can contain an eternally present god."

43:11. *Exits and its entrances.* The MT repeats a reference here to the temple's "design," which I omit for stylistic reasons. (The omitted phrase, "its entire design," occurs again in the next sentence. I have retained this third reference to the "design.")

Come to terms. The verb *ʿāśâ* here means "deal with," "engage," as at Ezek 7:27, 17:17, and 22:14. Given the genre "utopia," the exhortation is not about building the utopian temple but about changing the real world upon engaging with its principles (see the Comments). Rashi and Radak, however, understand the command to order an actual construction to occur in the end times. The latter explains that the exiles will understand the text "as a sign that they will yet rebuild the Temple . . . when the Redeemer comes and the dead are resurrected." The exiles themselves receive the exhortation, Radak writes, because they will come back to participate in the rebuilding at the resurrection.

43:12. *This is the charter.* S. Dean McBride Jr. (private lecture notes) observes the priestly provenance of the statement "this is the torah of such and such." The formula appears twice here and elsewhere only in P. It can be used as an introduction (e.g., Lev 6:2, 18) but also as a summarizing rubric (e.g., in Num 6:21, a PT verse edited by HS). I thus agree with McBride that Ezek 43:12 forms a literary hinge in the temple vision. It joins the vision's texts about territory and its texts about filling in and regulating the territory.

Most holy. Here, the expression "holy of holies" refers not to the temple's inner sanctum (see 41:4) but to the status of the sanctuary complex as a whole *relative to* the surrounding consecrated reserve area (see further Note *Most holy place* on 45:3). This is in no way a claim of undifferentiated, homogenous holiness across the temple mount. Such a misreading is understandable, however, and apparently stretches as far back in time as the work of the glossator of the *Vorlage* of LXX Ezek 42:20 (see O'Hare 2010, 107–9).

Comments

Having been brought back to the outer east gatehouse (43:1) from the west side of the temple complex (42:19), an awe-filled Ezekiel confronts God. For the first time, the *kābôd* (the bodily Presence) enters the utopian temple, permanently indwelling it (Wagner 2012, 285). The development is striking, since thus far the temple complex has been uninhabited and static, aside from intimations that meat and food lie waiting for God on the tables of 40:43 and 41:22. The Presence, appearing from the east, moves majestically along the temple's sacred east-west axis, containing the two east gates (cf. Gen 3:24), the central altar, the line of three sacred square zones (40:47, 41:13–15), and the adytum.

The Zadokites have a highly anthropomorphic understanding of the divine *kābôd,* which Ezekiel takes up. Settling within a single, unique dwelling, the *kābôd* commits itself to dwell (*šākan*) amid the tribes of Israel (Exod 25:8; 29:45, 46; Num 5: 3, 35:34, all HS; Ezek 37:27; 43:7, 9; cf. Zech 2:10). Reviewing these texts, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that God's Presence is tangibly and temporally localized, that God, in fact, has a "body." Webb (2012, 79) goes so far as to speak of a *material* deity, but one not composed of any kind of matter that we know about: "God's body . . . appears to be made of a matter yet unheard of." As noted in the Introduction, in

understanding divine embodiment in Ezekiel, I am particularly indebted to Sommer's work (2009).

During the exile the Presence refused to remain planted amid a reprobate Israel, but now the deity reoccupies a single, central Judean shrine (Exod 25:8, 40:35, both HS; Ezek 9:3, 10:4, 11:23). (Note that HS assumes centralization of worship in Judah; see Lev 17; 19:21; 24:1–9.) In both HS and Ezekiel, a single sanctuary of Israel houses the glory and forms the "incarnate" God's ideal earthly home. I follow Sommer (2009, 31, 195 n. 146) in defining "incarnation" as "the bodily presence of a deity" and do not at all imply that the Presence is "fleshly" in a sense comparable to a mortal human who may die. Rather, the *kābôd* is an "incarnation" akin to the "imperishable body" described in 1 Cor 15:42 and Rom 6:9 (see, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* III, q. 53, a. 3).

The return of the Presence (also see 44:4–5) marks a major juncture in Ezekiel's book as a whole. The movement of the *kābôd* forms something of a literary backbone to the book, structuring the entire work. The true home of the Presence is the Judean temple—as Ezek 35:10 states, "the Lord *was* there." Because of the collapse of the holiness matrix emanating from it, however, the Presence departed the temple, passing over its east gatehouse and disappearing to the east (10:19, 11:23). Now, in the utopian vision, the Presence returns using the exact same route by which it left.

Commenting on Ezek 43:7, Malbim perceived that something more must be happening here than a mere restoration of God's Presence as it had located itself in the temple in preexilic times (Ezek 9:3, 10:4, 11:23, 35:10). He saw a monumental shift or transformation, in which the Presence radically anchored itself on earth. Malbim was on to something. The vision of a permanent, secured presence of God's glory represents a new development within HS and Ezekiel. In the utopian temple, fewer icons are necessary to help mortals peer into the Beyond. Where in Ezekiel 40–48 are the ark of the covenant and the cherub statues that were present in the preexilic temple? In their place, there is a profoundly real presence of God filling the temple (Ezek 43:5; cf. Isa 6:4). Much less is left to the human imagination. (See Joyce 2007a, 225; Levitt Kohn 2002, 112; Kasher 1998, 192–98.)

Just as at the start of Ezekiel's book (3:12, 14), now at the close of the prophet's career God's spirit floods his reality, roaring like a tsunami. Ezekiel falls upon his face at the Lord's appearance (43:5), the very reaction to the Presence seen in HS (Num 16:22, 45 [MT 17:10]; see P. de Vries 2016, 253). God's spirit stands him up, however, and transports him back to the inner courtyard, back toward the center of the "labyrinth." The literary *pilgrimage,* the spiritual exercise of *walking the labyrinth,* continues. As the vision proceeds, however, the emphasis will be on occupying the zones and spaces of Ezekiel 40–42 with carefully outlined rites and ruled worship procedures. Duguid (1999, 488–89) draws a parallel with Genesis 1, where the spaces formed in days one through three of creation are filled in during days four through six.

The spirit moves Ezekiel physically, as in 8:3 and 11:1, 24—something not seen elsewhere in the Latter Prophets. In Ezekiel's book "spirit" exhibits other quite fascinating traits. Thus, the cherubim have a spirit that extends to affect external realities, such as the wheels of God's chariot (1:20–21, 10:17). It is likely an extension of God's own "spirit," something (or someone) independent of the Lord's bodily Presence.

Nathan MacDonald (2013) has recently clarified the nature of the spirit in biblical literature after the exile. Psalm 51:11 (MT 51:13) and Isa 63:10–11 describe an actual

"holy" spirit. In the latter of these instances, the spirit has personality. The people both rebel against and grieve the spirit. Like Ps 51:11, Ps 139:7 specifically holds God's spirit parallel to God's presence (God's "face"). Here, the psalmist is doubtless asking where he can go to escape from God's very self—the spirit is definitively the divine self.

The idiom in v. 5, and in 44:4, of the divine *kābôd* (Presence) "filling" the shrine echoes the HS description at Exod 40:34–35. Evans (2006, 183, 193) argues that Ezekiel is almost certainly copying the Exodus phraseology. Later, Hag 2:7 will echo the same language. The Presence is no mere messenger, representative, or avatar of God. The Presence *is* God; God is embodied (note the syntax of Exod 24:16 HS; Ezek 10:20).

In occupying the adytum and claiming the throne in v. 7, God refers to "the place of the soles of my feet." The language reminds us that this is a Zadokite narrative, with anthropomorphic diction characteristic of the HS source. Indeed, the mention of divine feet is reminiscent of the enormous bare footprints in the passageway floor before the entrance hall at the 'Ain Dara temple (Monson 2000, 26–27). The prints mark the temple as the physical abode of Baal Hadad, a deity more than 60 feet tall.

The God of the Zadokites is a deity who is interactively present among the people (Lev 26:12 HS), smells the soothing aroma of smoking fat (Lev 17:6, 26:31, both HS), and consumes sacrifices as food (Lev 21:6, Num 28:2, both HS; cf. Ezek 44:7). As at the 'Ain Dara temple, so in HS, God develops anthropomorphic attachments to the central shrine, calling it "my sanctuary" (Lev 19:30, 20:3, 26:2, all HS; Ezek 5:11, 8:6, 9:6, 23:39, 37:28). Ezekiel's Lord is devoted to Israel's land and temple (Lev 25: 23 HS).

Sin and defilement (i.e., Murk/*Düsternis;* see the Introduction) may repel the glory of the Lord, but God wills to vacate the land only temporarily. God is determined to maintain "direct contact" with Israel (Knohl 1995, 173), to indwell God's people tangibly, creating a "holy land" arrayed about a holy center. This plan ensures that the land's inhabitants will find blessing and sanctification (Ezek 37:27–28, Zech 2:10–12; see the HS texts at Lev 22:32; Num 5:3, 35:34). Eitz (1969, 40–42, 85) describes the differing theologies of Aaronide PT and the Zadokite Ezekiel quite aptly: "While with P the [glory] sets down at will in the 'tent of the meeting,' for Ezekiel, the Jerusalem temple is [the glory's] actual domicile [*eigentlichen Wohnsitz*], which it vacates only temporarily."

In contrast to HS and Ezekiel, PT completely disassociates God's *kābôd* (glory) from anything human or terrestrial. The transient spectacle of the "glory of the Lord" sometimes reveals God's presence on earth, but only in opaque clouds and smoke, pure light, and burning flames (e.g., Exod 24:15–18; Lev 9:23–24, 10:2, 16:2, all PT). Again Eitz (1969, 85 n. 7) summarizes things well: "With P, we are dealing with an all-consuming, fiery brightness, which must be shielded by a cloud in order to be bearable; with Ezekiel, [the divine glory] is something involving a human form." The God of PT does not bodily occupy an earthly shrine in the manner of Ezekiel's Presence.

Does Ezek 43:1–5 understand God to completely abandon heaven and commit to dwell exclusively on earth, as Sommer (2009, 76) argues? I am hesitant to conclude that the *kābôd* exhausts God's being (consult also Joyce 2007b, 20, 37) and beg readers' indulgence with some philosophical grounds for another view. Specifically, I propose a model of "hypostatic union" that allows for deity to add to its nature a terrestrial body but not thereby reduce itself fully to this embodiment. Embodiment and transcendence

each remain real but enjoy metaphysical connection and identity in one "hypostasis" (ὑπόστασις), one substantive reality. Note that at points Sommer's own understanding seems strikingly close to a hypostatic union construct (230 n. 100).

Early church figures such as Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. 297–373 CE) used the term "hypostatic union" to describe how two natures (divine and earthly) might coexist substantively in a single, real entity. According to this model, deity would not simply manifest itself in one of several possible forms accessible to human perception but actually take up embodiment into itself so that divinity becomes incarnate, takes on a body. I want to stress that this is *not* akin to what Sommer terms divine "fluidity." For HS and Ezekiel, deity emphatically does *not* present itself on earth in multiple forms and various locations. Rather, for the Zadokites, God is experienced on earth primarily as an integral anthropomorphic entity, not a divisible and fluid one.

The unique mention of God's feet in Ezek 43:7 conjures an image of the deity with feet planted firmly upon the earth, but with God's full being straddling both earth and heaven. The image resonates with Ezekiel's earlier visions of God's chariot, where the prophet sees human characteristics on the deity's lower half but something only like gleaming amber above (1:27). The text suggests that God, while remaining indivisibly one, is somehow able to occupy both heaven and earth. Readers interested in historical theology will be reminded of what Calvinism called the *extra calvinisticum.*

The Calvinistic "extra," a theological claim of the Reformed tradition, insisted that the second person of the Trinity maintained transcendence (the "extra") beyond human nature during the incarnation. In this view, the Son is fully united to, but never fully contained within, a terrestrial body. Certain New Testament texts come to mind that resonate with this claim. Jesus asserts in Matt 28:20, "Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." So too, Heb 1:3 carefully describes how Christ's powerful word *is upholding* creation, even while Jesus was on earth accomplishing cleansing for sins.

C. S. Lewis popularized for a modern audience the view that bilocation is possible without fragmentation or fluidity. In Lewis's Narnia stories, the Pevensie children return to England through the magical wardrobe from many years of adventures elsewhere to find that not a second of their old life has elapsed. Thinking of God's Presence having similar freedom from normal physical constraints resolves a paradox associated with the prophet's inaugural vision of God's throne-chariot. Although the Presence will not decisively abandon Jerusalem until a later time (Ezek 11:23), Ezekiel already sees God's chariot by the River Chebar in Ezekiel 1–3. The explanation is not a "fluidity" of God's body (against McCall 2014, 387); rather, Ezekiel saw what is nonmimetic, transcends time, and came to Babylonia without a second of absence from its dwelling in Jerusalem.

Ezekiel's concern (or that of his editors, see Tuell 2009, 294–95) in vv. 7–9 with the disastrous role of kingship and palace in the preexilic temple's collapse should come as no surprise. Already Ezek 4:5 traces the temple's pollution 390 years back to Solomon's construction of a unified palace-temple complex. According to 43:8, merely a single wall separated the temple compound and palace grounds throughout the monarchic era (see Note *Only a wall* on 43:8).

The proximity of the temple to the palace, with its many sources of minor, major, and extreme impurity (including corpse impurity), presented an overwhelming

concern as a source of defilement of the sanctuary. As a result, the utopian vision will place God's temple far above and away from the land's central city (45:6); it will replace the royal monarch with a ruling "chieftain" (*nāśîʾ,* 44:3); and it will move the *nāśîʾ* out of the city to more peripheral lands (45:7).

Ezekiel's moves against monarchy are revolutionary, given the close ties of state and temple in the ancient Near Eastern world. For example, as Carvalho (1992, 38) notes, in the Assyrian era, the Nabu temple at Khorsabad sat on a platform that aligned it with the height of the royal palace, to which a special royal bridge connected it. The palace also incorporated three small temples of its own, with no temenos wall enclosing them. Physical proximity was accompanied by intimate economic links. Mesopotamian archival records repeatedly attest a key role of temples in state economies (11). Thus, kings were temple builders, and temples were part of royal administrations.

Ezekiel 43:7–9 severs the utopian temple not only from monarch and palace, but also from any connection with the underworld. Directly engaging Israelite practices surrounding the Hebrew term *peger,* Ezekiel's school insists that the temple precincts be completely untainted by death's defiling uncleanness (cf. 44:25). The term *peger* is rendered "corpse" in the NRSV but arguably is better understood here as a reference to dead-offerings (NIV) and the funerary monuments at which they occurred (REB, NET, VOICE). The corpses of Judean kings were not buried near temple precincts but were interred within Jerusalem's original bounds, within the City of David (e.g., 1 Kgs 11:43; 14:31; 15:8, 24; 16:20). They were laid to rest in the city's royal cave tomb and, in two cases, in the Garden of Uzza (2 Kgs 21:18, 26) within the palace grounds (*bĕgan-bêtô*).

The root *pgr* in the ancient Near Eastern milieu points to sacrificial rites and stone fixtures for devotions to the dead, including veneration of the royal dead. From ancient Mari, we know that the term could signify a particular sacrifice for the dead, the *pagrāʾum* (death offering). A stela inscription from the Dagan temple site at Ugarit (*KTU* 6.13) calls the stela itself a *pagru:* "A stela that AAA raised up for Dagan as a *pagru,* a sheep and a bull for the meal." Another stela (*KTU* 6.14) identifies itself as "a *pagru* that BBB raised up for Dagan his Lord: a sheep and a bull" (see Johnston 2002, 179).

The Ugaritic inscriptions (*KTU* 6.13 and 6.14) attest to ritual meals venerating dead ancestors associated with funerary stelae. As Izaak de Hulster (2009, 153) notes, the evidence shows that the sense of *peger* as "dead offering" (his preferred sense for Ezekiel 43; cf. *HALOT peger* B. b. 2) does not contradict the term's sense as "stela," the sense that *HALOT* (*peger* B. a. 1) assigns to Lev 26:30 (HS). (For additional bibliography, see Johnston 2002, 180 n. 56; de Hulster 2009, 153 n. 59; Suriano 2010, 102 n. 22.)

By the same token, the two senses of *peger* as "dead-monument" and "corpse" are not mutually exclusive. As a funerary stela, the *peger* would have represented the petrified presence of a living-dead soul—a kind of praising corpse. As de Hulster (2009, 168) writes, the upright stone "functions as a petrified prayer, a lithified liturgy of perpetual praise." De Hulster (157–8, fig. 6.3, 162) finds an example of this sort of stela in a standing stone in Hazor Shrine 6136 carved with the raised hands of a deceased ancestor. Later (Iron Age) examples include a row of five cultic stones in Wadi Arabah and groups of five standing stones in the area around Tel Dan's gate. These represent groups

of five ancestors and perhaps—this is speculative—also the five digits of an upraised hand (158–59).

The Zadokites behind HS and Ezekiel considered *pagru* rites and fixtures to represent a radical threat to the HS covenant. They do not forbid the general populace from caring for their living-dead (cf. Lev 10:4–6) but are vigilant against the frightful pollution entailed in an encroachment of death upon the temple. God's shrine must be kept clean of all slithering nether-mire, instantly defiling whatever it contacts. Enough! Enough with this infernal antipode to temple realms, this diametric opposition to God's mountain heights! To be Zadokite was to shun this defiling sludge, lest it contact God's holiness and "wrath will strike all the congregation" (Lev 10:6 HS).

Fascinatingly, the Aaronide texts of Third Isaiah take a different stand on *peger* rites and stelae within the temple. Isaiah 56:3–5 retains mortuary memorials in God's future temple, assuring eunuchs that such stelae guarantee that they will not lose their ongoing membership among the living after death. The stela within the temple precincts in Isa 56:5, to which *yād wāšēm* refers, is a mortuary memorial. It is designed to ensure an interconnection (a *šēm ʿôlām,* an invocation name) of the deceased eunuch with the living. Without offspring (v. 5), the eunuch fears he will lose his "remembrance," his ongoing membership among the living after his death (cf. *KTU* 1.171 26–28). In 2 Sam 18:18 Absalom solves his identical concern with just such a *yād.*

The eunuch lacks children to re-member him among the living, but a *peger* will reunite the being of his living-dead shade with the earthly worship community. God takes the initiative in this, erecting the *yād* within the temple precincts. In a move diametrically opposite to the thrust of Ezek 43:7–9, Isaiah 56 thus advocates a caring relationship with a departed soul maintained specifically within the temple grounds. De Hulster (2009, 168) accurately writes, "The Lord takes up the task of a child by providing the childless with a memorial stele . . . placing it in his own presence, in his temple."

Again addressing Ezekiel as "Human One" (cf. v. 7), the concluding verses of our passage (43:10–12) direct the prophet to communicate his vision. At the start of Ezekiel 40–48, God had instructed Ezekiel to "declare all that you see to the house of Israel" (40:4), and now God repeats the charge. All that lies between these literary "bookends" is primarily teaching material for God's people. Verse 10 advises readers that the aim of the instruction is first of all that God's people "will be ashamed." The idea that *shame* is central to God's restoration is characteristic of Ezekiel (16:54, 61; 36:32).

Ezekiel has entered the world of the utopia as an outsider, a temporary guest. He is learning its new imagination only for the purpose of bringing it back and conveying it to his audience so that they can see themselves as they really are, that is, as God sees them. With this new knowledge, they can renew their relationship with God. The goal is to change their own world, not make a beeline for Ezekiel's utopia. This fits utopias in general. The outside world cannot long penetrate them without spoiling them. Hanna Liss (2006, 139–40; cf. 143) aptly describes how Ezekiel 40–48 bends over backwards to protect God "precisely from those whom he wants *to reside among forever.*"

A misunderstanding may arise from the way English translations render v. 11. The command to "follow the entire plan" (NRSV), to "carry it out" (NJB), sounds like an order to construct the temple in the here and now. Such an order, of course, would not fit the nature of literary utopias, which, as Schweitzer (2006, 19) argues, must be

read "*not as blueprints* for ideal societies, but rather as *revolutionary texts* designed to challenge the *status quo.*" Again, as noted above, Ezekiel 40–48 contains insufficient data (such as figures for height) to build a temple, and no orders, decrees, or decisions to build (contrast the experience of Moses, Exod 25:8–9; of Solomon, 2 Sam 7:13, 1 Kgs 5:5; of Gudea, ruler of Lagash, Gudea Cylinder A, col. 4, line 8 to col. 7, line 10; and of Baal, *KTU* 4.4.62–63). The vision also emphasizes humanly impracticable elements, such as a west building where an open valley stood (see Carvalho 1992, 163 n. 67), a supernatural river of Eden, and a "platonic" tribal land apportionment that ignores topography. Carvalho rightly considers such elements part of the text's essential message, stating explicitly that the utopia "not only was not but . . . could not be built, not at any level of the text" (188).

We must abandon the view, expressed baldly by Cooke (1936, 425), that Ezekiel was "the most practical of reformers . . . , poring over architectural plans and regulations for worship." Ezekiel 40–48 is specifically *not* about priestly circles "writing down current practice, suggesting plans for future legislation, and handing about drafts" (426).

The Hebrew of v. 11 allows for my rendering, alternative to the NRSV: "They must come to terms with them," that is, with the temple's design and regulations (see Note *Come to terms* on 43:11). To "come to terms" with the utopian temple as Ezekiel describes it means to "live by its design and intent" (MESSAGE), to take it up as a text of social critique. No construction is at issue. The utopia itself is already a construction, "an alternative world that calls the present order into question at every turn" (Schweitzer 2006, 18).

Bennett Simon (2009, 430–31) aptly describes how in this passage all the precise geometry in preceding texts connects explicitly with a goal of moral transformation: "The connection between transforming the moral and religious wildness and sinfulness of the people by means of temple measurement is explicit in Ezek 43:10–11. . . . We thus see a confluence of proper proportion in the moral and architectural realms." Stevenson (1996, 26; cf. xx, 91) points to the *square* ratio of 1:1 as the central proportion that Israel is to study. Since the square *is* holiness in "material representation," she argues, "the command to measure the proportion in 43:10 is part of a rhetorical strategy to restructure a society according to a theology of holiness" (42). The profane, defiling society of Israel's past simply *did not square* (see Simon 2009, 431)!

The Altar and Its Consecration (43:13–27)

43 [13]These are the measurements of the altar: The trench [a channel or gutter around the altar] is 21 inches [deep] and 21 inches wide, with a curb 9 inches wide at its edge. The height of the altar is as follows: [14]From the trench in the ground the altar rises 3 ½ feet to the lowest ledge, which is 21 inches wide [all around the altar]. From the lower ledge the altar rises 7 feet to the upper ledge, which is also 21 inches wide. [15]The hearth [the top level for burning sacrifices] is another 7 feet up. Four horns project upward from the [corners of the] hearth. [16]Now the hearth is square with four equal sides, 21 feet by 21 feet. [17]The [upper] ledge also is square, 24 ½ feet by 24 ½ feet, with an outer curb, 10 ½ inches [high]. [There is a second, upper] surrounding channel [cut in the upper ledge]. [Inclusive of the upper curb, it is] 21 inches [wide] all around. There are steps ascending the east side of the altar.

[18]Then he said to me: Human One, Message from the Sovereign Lord: These are the regulations for the altar when it is prepared for offering burned offerings on it and for dashing blood against it. [19]At that time, you shall give a bull of the herd for a purification offering to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who may draw near to serve before me—utterance of the Sovereign Lord. [20]Take some of its blood and put it on the four horns [of the altar], the four corners of the [upper] ledge, and all around the curb [on the ledge], and so cleanse it and make atonement for it. [21]Then take the [carcass of the] bull selected as the purification offering; it shall be burned at the designated place of the temple outside the sanctuary precinct.

[22]On the second day, you shall offer a male goat without blemish for a purification offering. The altar shall be cleansed [again], as it was cleansed with the bull. [23]When you have finished cleansing, offer [another] bull of the herd without blemish and an unblemished ram from the flock. [24]Present them before the Lord and the priests shall throw salt on them and offer them as an entirely burned offering to the Lord. [25]For seven days you shall provide every day a goat for a purification offering; also a bull of the herd and a ram from the flock, both without blemish, shall be provided. [26]For

seven days atonement shall be made for the altar and it shall be cleansed. Thus shall it be consecrated. [27]At the end of that time, from the eighth day on, the priests will sacrifice your entirely burned offerings and your communion offerings on the altar, and I will accept you—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

Notes

43:13. *Measurements.* The text supplies additional information: "by [long] cubits (the cubit being 1 cubit and a handbreadth)." Since I convert all measurements to American standard feet and inches, I leave untranslated this bit of the Hebrew. The renewed definition of the terms of measurement is one of several signals that a new phase in Ezekiel 40–48 has begun. Measurement continues, but it is now accompanied by elaborations of the personnel and rituals that will fill the holy spaces described in Ezekiel 40–42. Why has the altar, which Ezekiel earlier observed at 40:47, not been measured until now? Milgrom (2012, 120) is doubtless correct that measuring the altar separately, only at this point, and in minute detail sets it apart as a focal center of the temple's design. This oversize square installation absorbs Israel's sin and impurity and then radiates out holiness to Israel's far reaches, inducing an interactive system symbolized by a pattern of concentric squares projecting out from the altar (see the Comments on 42:15–20).

Trench. According to *HALOT,* the Hebrew here is an architectural technical expression that denotes a groove or channel dug into the ground all around the altar (fig. 8, bottom, location A).

[Deep]. Here, I follow the LXX's reference to "depth," which clarifies the ambiguous Hebrew.

21 inches wide. We learn below in v. 17 that the figure given for the width of the altar's second, upper channel includes the width of the curb running around it (see Note *[Inclusive of the upper curb]* on 43:17 and fig. 8, bottom, location B). Thus, I assume that the same holds true here in v. 13 of the lower channel.

Height. Again, I follow the LXX and emend the Hebrew to read *gōbah* (height). The MT reading, *gab* (base; Vulgate: trench), may perhaps be understood to refer back to the preceding dimensions (consult ASV, NASB).

43:14. *Trench in the ground.* The Hebrew can literarily mean "the lap/bosom of the earth," an allusion to the archetypal quality of temple space as the center of the earth and nexus with the heavenly realm (see the Comments). It is unclear whether Ezekiel is measuring from ground level or from the bottom of the trench. Block (1998, 598) assumes the latter, while I assume the former (see fig. 8, bottom, location C).

43:15. *Hearth.* Ezekiel uses two different Hebrew spellings for "altar hearth" in vv. 15–16. The first, *harʾēl,* looks and sounds in Hebrew like "the mountain of God." The second, *ʾărîʾēl,* which appears in both v. 15 and v. 16, echoes Isaiah's term "Ariel" (see Isa 29:1–2, 7). See the discussion in the Comments.

Another 7 feet up. The ambiguous Hebrew of v. 15 says merely "the hearth is 7 feet." Block (1998, 598, 601) takes the figure to be the same dimension given in v. 14. Minimizing the altar's resemblance to a ziggurat, he puts the altar's hearth at the same level as its upper ledge. I doubt that this minority interpretation is correct. It reduces the hearth to nothing more than a flat plaster area. For my understanding, in which the altar very much resembles a Babylonian ziggurat, see figure 8. Other biblical and

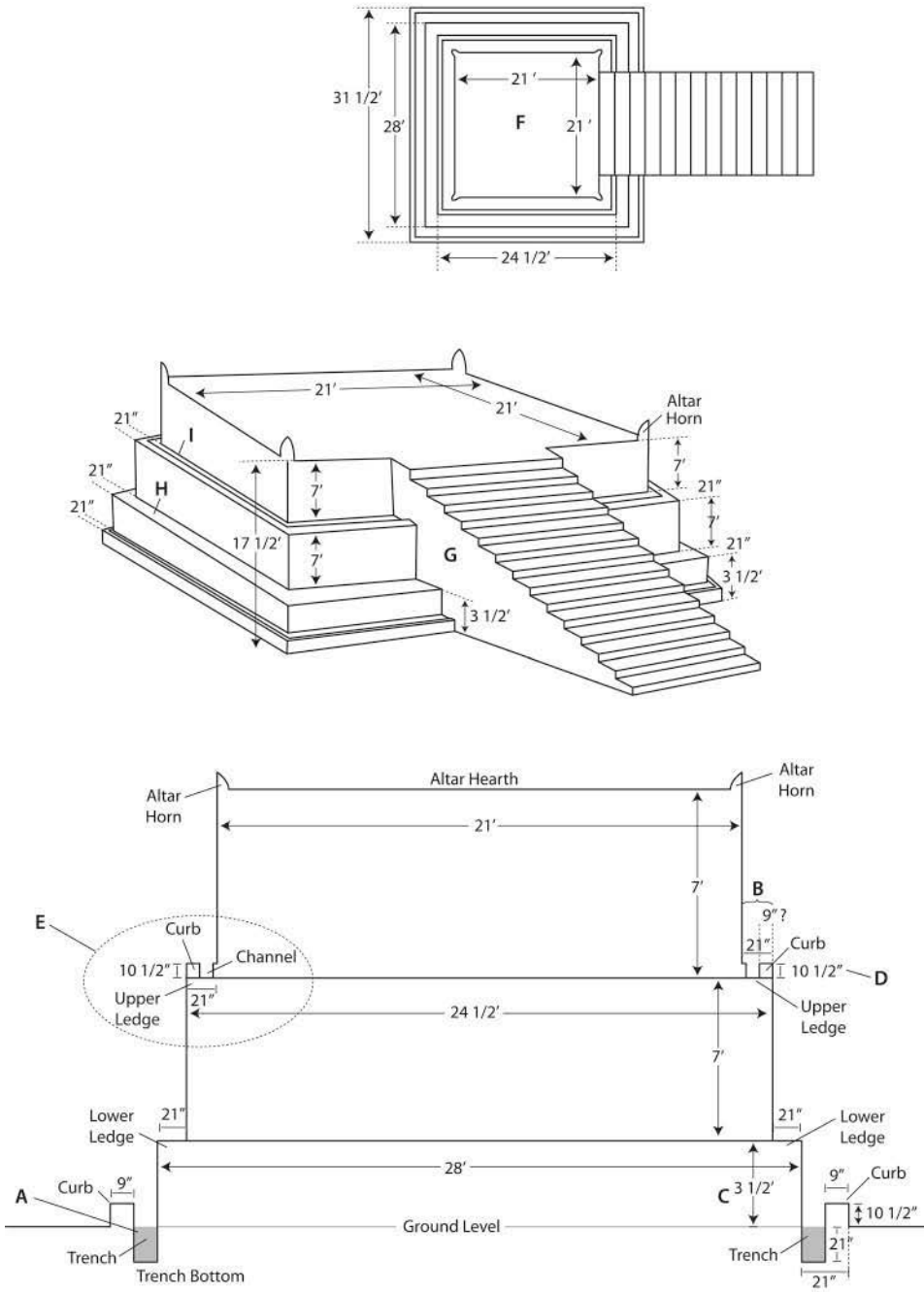


Figure 8. Ezekiel's central altar of burned offerings. Images by William L. Nelson. Key: A = Lower trench, B = Width of upper channel and curb, C = Height of lower ledge, D = Height of upper curb, E = Upper trench area, F = Overhead view of altar, G = Central stairway, H = Lower ledge, I = Upper ledge.

Israelite altars did not have anything like this stepped, tiered shape, but it fits the architectural and theological design of the utopia well (see the COMMENTS).

43:16. *Hearth.* A scribe may have produced the odd spelling *ʾărīʾêl* of the *ketib* of vv. 15–16 when thinking of a ram (*ʾayil*) under the influence of the four prominent "horns" here. In Zech 1:18–21, the horns of the temple altar transfigure apocalyptically into the bestial powers of the godless nations that have oppressed and exiled Israel.

43:17. *10 ½ inches [high].* The dimension probably refers to the height of the curb, so that its width is the same as that of the lower curb, which is 9 inches (see fig. 8, bottom, location D). Figure 8 assumes that the ground-level curb is also 10 ½ inches high. If so, it is one-fourth the height of the altar's bottom tier, fitting the utopia's preference for multiples of four.

Surrounding channel. Most English translations do not make clear that the altar's *upper* block had a second trench, a channel cut into the ledge's surface on all sides. There was also a second rim or curb, which stopped blood and other sacrificial remains from falling completely off the altar (see fig. 8, bottom, location E).

[Inclusive of the upper curb]. If width is the dimension at issue, the upper channel/trench and its curb *together* must measure 21 inches in order for the numbers in vv. 16–17 to add up correctly. The upper channel is likely 21 inches deep as well as wide, like the lower trench (43:13).

Steps. The stair ramp would have to lead all the way to the altar's top. Here, the resemblance to a Mesopotamian ziggurat temple tower is most striking. In addition to its value marking the altar as God's cosmic mountain, the stairway has a practical value. Because of the altar's height of 17 ½ feet, the priests could not work with the burning sacrifices without standing at the level of the hearth. Exodus 20:26 forbade steps on altars, so that "your nakedness may not be exposed upon it." Ezekiel's priests wear special undergarments (see 44:18), so this altar's steps do not pose such a risk. Exodus 20:25 forbade chiseling any stones to make an altar, but the exacting specifications of Ezekiel's altar require precisely shaped stones. Apparently no tension with Exodus was felt, since these stones were heaven-made, not dressed with chisels.

43:18. *Message from the Sovereign LORD.* This is the first occurrence of the prophetic messenger formula in Ezekiel's vision of the temple. It occurs seven additional times in the vision, helping to signal the shift away from the visual revelations of spatial zones in Ezekiel 40–42 to spoken revelations in Ezekiel 43–46 about the personnel and rituals that fill the spaces. The angelic guide functions as a prophet in 43:18, relaying the divine word. Later in 44:5–6 Ezekiel will emphasize that the Lord is addressing him directly.

Prepared. Most English translations render the infinitive *ʿāśôt* as "built," but this wrongly implies a future human construction of the altar in Jerusalem. I follow the CEB translation in understanding the verb *ʿāśâ* here to refer to the altar's ceremonial preparation, an ideal, utopian ritual. For *ʿāśâ* meaning "prepare," "transform," or "commission," see Num 28:6, 1 Kgs 12:31, Ps 104:4, Jer 37:15, Ezek 12:3, and Neh 13:7.

43:19. *You.* Block (1998, 606–7) and Duguid (1999, 491, 494) are too literal minded in assigning Ezekiel himself a prominent role in the decontamination ceremony. As has been argued, this utopia is *not* to be built and dedicated in real time. In using the second-person "you" here, the text simply addresses Ezekiel as a stand-in for people in general, as Eliezer of Beaugency perceived.

Bull of the herd. The expression "bull of the herd" (NJPS, ESV), a priestly idiom from Leviticus and Numbers, refers to a domesticated bull (Milgrom 1991, 232).

Draw near to serve. The Hebrew diction parallels that in Ezek 40:46, which first specified that, among the duties of the temple's inner court, altar ministry was to be the exclusive bailiwick of the Zadokites. Ezekiel 44:10–16 will defend and elaborate the hierarchical headship of the Zadokites.

Utterance of the Sovereign LORD. This is the first occurrence of the prophetic utterance formula in Ezekiel's utopian vision. The guide continues to function as a prophet, and signs of a literary transition within Ezekiel 40–48 continue to emerge.

43:21. *[Carcass of the] bull.* It is clear from Lev 4:11–12 that this is the same animal previously slaughtered (Lev 4:4).

Designated place of the temple. A possible alternate reading is "by the temple guard," perhaps the Aaronide priests (consult Block 1998, 594 n. 38, 608).

Outside the sanctuary precinct. Leviticus 4:12 specifies that the carcass of the purification offering is burned "outside the camp" (cf. Exod 29:14; Lev 4:21, 8:17). Ezekiel likely has in mind a designated spot outside the walled temple precincts (contrast REB; for *miqdāš* as a term for the entire sacred precinct inside the outer walls, see Ezek 44:1, 11). Milgrom (2012, 130) reconstructs a guard post beyond the temple's outer wall, next to a dumping ground for impure sacrifices.

43:22. *Male goat.* The idiomatic phrase *śĕʿîr-ʿizzîm,* literally "a buck of goats," comes from priestly sacrificial language of the Pentateuch.

43:24. *Before the LORD.* The language of being directly before God presenting offerings occurs elsewhere in Ezekiel only in speaking of the Zadokites in 44:15.

Salt. According to Lev 2:13, offerings, or at least grain offerings (see NET, NLT), should have salt on them. Numbers 18:19 (HS) is less ambiguous, speaking specifically of salt, symbolic of preservation, in conjunction with both grain and meat offerings consumed by priests. These offerings are a "covenant of salt forever before the LORD," that is, a covenant perpetually preserved. Ezekiel's echo of HS and its salt symbolism reminds the reader of the permanence of God's indwelling of the ideal temple. The same symbolism recurs later in Ezek 47:11.

43:26. *Consecrated.* Milgrom (2012, 124–25) points out that the altar is not sanctified, but purified, readied for use, and inaugurated. He thinks the choice of language emphasizes the role of the altar in interacting with the people of Israel. Note that the Hebrew uses an idiom of priestly installation, which practically personifies the altar. To "fill someone's hands [with sacral authority or with sacred offerings]" means to invest the candidate with priestly responsibilities and with rights to a portion of sacred offerings (priestly prebends). The altar's hands both distribute holiness, sanctifying the people (Exod 29:37 HS; Ezek 42:14, 44:19, 46:20), and receive guilt, absorbing and processing defilement coming in from the land, where the people of Israel live and work.

43:27. *Communion offerings.* The blood of this type of offering was sprinkled around the altar and the portions of fat consumed on the altar hearth (Lev 3; 9:18–21).

I will accept you. The Hebrew uses a variant spelling of the verb *rāṣâ,* "take pleasure in," "be favorable toward." Use of the verb, known from Leviticus as a priestly technical term, recalls Ezek 20:40–41, its only other occurrence in the book.

Comments

With the prophet and his guide still positioned within the temple compound's inner altar square (43:5), Ezek 43:13–27 describes the dimensions of the central altar of burned offerings, which the prophet first saw in front of the temple in 40:47. Why this new act of measuring, when the temple's design and layout already stand defined (43:10–11)? At least two answers to this question commend themselves.

First, postponing the measuring to this juncture singles out the altar as having a crucial role in inducing Ezekiel's holiness matrix (see Note *Measurements* on 43:13). The perfectly square altar, possessing "effective sacral force" (Milgrom 2012, 125), sits in the sacral system's dead center, within a perfectly square altar court (40:47), within a holy, square temple complex (42:20). The careful concentric pattern is familiar from preceding descriptions within the vision emphasizing the temple's sanctifying dynamism.

Second, the measuring of the altar specifies several vertical dimensions, which have the rhetorical role of projecting the altar into reality. As in 40:42–43 and 41:22, notice of the height of sacrificial tables and altars begins to bring them to life. Thus, the text fits well the present section of the vision, which shifts from mostly demarcating territory to filling spaces with life and activity (as in days four through six of creation). A cleansing of the altar and an initiating of its operations might have been expected at precisely this juncture. The text fits known patterns.

Ezekiel 43:12 functions as a pivot. It is a hinge verse joining the vision's texts about territory and its texts about filling in and inhabiting the territory. On one hand, v. 12 summarizes how all the toured zones of the temple join in fulfilling a core aim of holiness (consult Radak and *Meṣudat David*). On the other hand, v. 12 introduces the principles and ritual regulations to follow in subsequent chapters of Ezekiel 40–48 (Tuell 2009, 302–3). These chapters, on a purely *theoretical* level, will fill the various zones of the temple complex with personnel, worshipers, and worship activity.

Vertical dimensions are rare in the utopia, the rhetoric of which focuses on delineating zones of holiness, not on describing structures (Stevenson 1996, 5, 19). Dimensions for the trench surrounding the altar conjure images of sacrificial blood flowing by the thousands of gallons (the trench capacity is more than 3,800 US gallons). A staircase ascending 17 ½ feet off the ground, almost two stories, evokes images of priests climbing up to burn offerings. As Stevenson (139) notes, 40:47 situates the altar, and 43:13–17 allows it to become real. In the latter text sanctifying power is revving up!

The need for sacrifices within a utopian world gives the reader pause. From the eighth day onward, the altar receives offerings necessitated by offenses against God, by violations of the covenant. Both purification offerings and reparation offerings are necessary (40:39; 42:13; 44:29; 45:8, 17–25; 46:20). Apparently, human failings are not yet obsolete within the scope of the vision (45:17, 20). Again, a literary utopia does not assume a scenario of realized eschatology, of a heaven of God descended into the earthly sphere. Rather, it grapples with the real world, in all its brokenness. Ezekiel's promised heart transplant within all Israel is not presupposed by this vision (11:19–20, 36:26–27; Lyons 2010, 28). Here, contrast Milgrom (2012, 43).

The text of 43:13–27 measures the altar and also details procedures for its initial consecration (vv. 18–27). The latter element may reflect planning or actual regulations

from the sixth-century restoration era (Tuell 2009, 302). Addressing an ambiguous "you" as the audience (see Note *You* on 43:19), it may incorporate plans to dedicate a rebuilt altar in the Persian province of Yehud. It is unclear, however, how this altar might relate to the one erected in Ezra 3:2 (see Radak on Ezek 43:19). Whatever the case here, the present canonical text has its own integrity (Joyce 2007a, 228). The text remains a literary utopia, even as the torah of the altar begins. Divinely shaped stones form the altar, ones hewn without chisels (see Note *Steps* on 43:17).

Measured in cubits, the hearth at the altar's top is a square of 12 cubits per side (v. 16; 21 feet in my translation). Twelve is a sacred number. Consider the twelve Israelite tribes (Ezek 47:13), the twelve gates of the new central city (Ezek 48:30–35), the twelve stones of the chief priest's breastplate (Exod 39:14 HS), and the twelve loaves of the bread of the Presence (Lev 25:5 HS; cf. Ezek 41:22). Twelve is four times three, a pair of numbers highly significant within Ezekiel 40–48. Squares in rows of three occur inside each gate tower (the square chambers labeled *A* in fig. 3) and in the inner courtyard, along the east-west axis of the temple compound (see the second Image referenced in Note *Yard* on 40:47 [see Appendix]).

Not only is the altar's hearth square, but its successively receding levels make it a series of squares within squares when viewed from above (see fig. 8, drawing F [top]). These nested squares lie at the center of a larger square, the altar yard of 40:47 (see fig. 2, location J). This yard is the first, eastern square of a series of three square zones along the temple's central, east-west axis, its "holy spine." Ezekiel 41:13–15 described the second and third zones within this series of squares 175 feet (100 cubits) on a side. The Most Holy Place, the perfectly square adytum (41:4; see fig. 6, location J), is also a square within a square zone, the central square of the row along the holy spine.

Viewed from the side, the altar has the shape of a three-level, stepped/layered structure, a terraced step-pyramid—a ziggurat temple tower. At home in Babylonia, such a design was not at all typical of altars in the ancient Levant. Especially reminiscent of the ziggurat is the altar's central stairway (v. 17) leading to the highest tier (see Note *Steps* on 43:17 and fig. 8, middle, location G). A ziggurat is an archetypal "sacramental" icon of God's mountain paradise of Eden; its stairway, a portal to heaven (cf. the *sullām,* "ramp," of Gen 28:12). (For Eden as a garden atop God's cosmic mountain, see Ezek 28:13–14, 40:2, 43:12.) The ziggurat is not, however, the literal garden of Eden itself.

Ezekiel had no respect for Babylonian worship at ziggurats; nevertheless, he had no qualms about accepting the archetypal value of a Babylonian architectural icon. We will see a similar openness to the symbols of the exiles' captors below in Ezek 45:18–20. There, Ezekiel introduces into Israel's ceremonial calendar an innovative New Year's festival based to some extent on a precedent in Babylonian ritual.

The altar's symbolic and sacramental significance is quickly confirmed in the passage through unique terminology. The trench around the altar's base (43:14) is named literally the "bosom" or "lap" of the earth (cf. 38:12). The reader infers that the altar marks "thin space," a portal zone where the terrestrial and the heavenly planes interconnect. In a literary utopia, heaven has not yet come to earth. The temple world still separates ontological planes by such thin spaces. Temple elements continue to point beyond themselves to a greater, transhistorical reality, where God maintains a presence.

Spelling variations suggestive of various wordplays make the description of the hearth of the altar, its top surface, in vv. 15–16 especially interesting. The initial Hebrew spelling of "hearth" in v. 15, *har'ēl,* looks and sounds like "mountain of God." This wordplay, making the altar an icon of the cosmic mountain (*Weltberg, Urhügel*), certainly reinforces the symbolism of the altar's ziggurat shape, which evokes Mount Eden. A second spelling in vv. 15–16, *'ărî'ēl,* is the actual cultic technical term for "altar hearth" but occurs five times in Isa 29:1–8 as a punning moniker for Jerusalem. Since *'ărî'ēl* occurs biblically only in Ezekiel 43 and Isaiah 29, Ezekiel likely alludes to Isaiah.

Christopher Hays (2011, 264–66), citing work by Ronald Youngblood, suggests that Isaiah's wordplay juxtaposes URU-*El* (city of El) and *'arî'el* (altar hearth). The first word, URU-*El,* imitates the Assyrians' pronunciation of "Jerusalem," substituting the word *El* (God) for *šlm,* the original theophoric element. The VOICE paraphrase captures the sense: "I [God] will trouble . . . [URU-*El,* the city of God]. . . . She will be for me an [*'arî'el,* a conflagration like a] fiery hearth" (Isa 29:2). The NLT also has this sense: "Jerusalem will become what her name Ariel means—an altar covered with blood." Relatedly, Isa 31:9 declares that God's "fire [*'ûr*] is in Zion."

Ezekiel fully agrees that God's temple city can easily be identified with a fiery altar hearth. God-fire burns numinously atop the cultic hearth in the midst of the utopian complex. As in Ezek 10:1–2 and Lev 10:6 (HS), it is here, out in the yard at the front of the shrine, where God's fiery numinousness puts everyone at risk. It is here, at this locale, that God says, "I show my holiness, and before all the people I show my glory" (Lev 10:3 NJB, cf. NLT). Here, "I will manifest my glorious presence" (CEB). Ezekiel is surely alluding in particular to the finale of the inauguration of sacrificial worship in Lev 9:24, where blazing fire consumes the entirely burned offering and the fat pieces on the altar.

With Ezek 43:18–27, the passage shifts from a description of the altar to a key ritual initiating its operation. What is the purpose of consecrating a heaven-built altar? Certainly, the ceremony confirms God's return, reversing past tragedy. It marks the indwelling of the shrine by the Presence. As Carvalho (1992, 159) notes, 1 Kings 8 takes notice of the temple altar and describes copious dedicatory sacrificing directly after the Presence first occupies Solomon's temple. Bodi (2009, 494) notes similar "abundant offerings" after the moon god Sin returns to his temple in Harran.

The order of ceremonies in the Babylonian *akitu* festival is especially relevant for appreciating the altar consecration of Ezekiel 43. In the festival, temple cleansing follows Marduk's triumphal return to his place. Based on the *akitu* pattern, cleansing rites and animal sacrifices are eminently appropriate at this juncture in Ezekiel 40–48. The cleansing confirms that God is back. Unlike in Babylonia, the Presence is here to stay, so vv. 18–27 describe a one-time ritual that permanently activates the shrine's graded tiers of holiness.

Verses 20 and 26 specify that even a stone altar needs "atonement," "propitiation" (*kipper*), within this literary world. It is not that the altar has gone into exile and become unclean, as the Israelites have (cf. Ezek 4:12–15, Zech 3:3–5). It is certainly not that the altar has somehow sinned or transgressed norms of ritual purity. Rather, the point is that the ordinary, even in all its plainness and normality, is simply not able to function adequately in near proximity to God's bodily presence. When devouring holiness bears down on something, mere ordinariness will not do (Jenson 2009,

310–11). Rashi thus aptly interprets the altar's atonement rite: "You shall 'wipe' it of its ordinariness."

The attention lavished on consecrating the altar drives home God's bodily presence and also begins to orient a restored Israel around that presence. The altar is about the tribes of Israel, not about divine narcissism. Its orientation on the twelve tribes is already suggested in the *12-cubit* (21 feet in my translation) length and width of the altar hearth (v. 16). Verse 27 is specific about relationship with Israel as the goal of the installation proceedings.

The literary artistry of the text points to a highly interactive relationship of God and Israel. The altar anchors a network of nested sacral zones (see Note *Measurements* on 43:13) and is virtually animate, described in near anthropomorphic terms in the Hebrew. Like the cherub distributing holy, numinous fire in Ezek 10:7, the altar has *hands.* They both distribute and receive (see Note *Consecrated* on 43:26). Once consecrated and operational, a working, dynamic altar allows God to declare, "I will accept you." Thanks to the altar's inauguration, the HS covenant between God and Israel is permanently reinstated. The mention of salt in v. 24 recalls the "covenant of salt forever" (Num 18:19 HS), a covenant *salted* like cured meat—safe and secure.

The altar works to sanctify (Exod 29:37 HS; Ezek 42:14, 44:19, 46:20), spreading holiness. As Milgrom (2012, 125) notes, "the very placement of the altar in the 'sacred spine,' indeed in dead center of the temple compound, may have provided it with sacral power." Simultaneously, it works to cleanse, absorbing and processing defilement. Leviticus 16:19b is clear that according to the logic of priestly ritual Israel's impurities actually attach themselves to the temple altar (see Gilders 2004, 131). Thus, as Stevenson (1996, 40; cf. 91–92, 139, 142) aptly summarizes: "The House of YHWH is not only the source of holiness, it is also the focal point for impurity. Since impurity is dynamic and contagious, any impurity in society or cosmos is attracted to this holy place."

The altar processes impurity and sin from the land, expunging the contamination in the blood of sacrifices. Even as the altar undergoes its consecration, Ezek 43:21 illustrates the altar's power of expelling defilement. The verse orders the carcass of the bull used to purify the altar burned outside the sanctuary precinct, ejecting the impurity imputed through the altar to the bull when its blood touched the structure (the principle of *pars pro toto*). Milgrom (2012, 129) correctly describes the role of the carcass as "bearing in full the absorbed impurity" (consult the analysis of Gilders 2004, 130).

The Outer East Gatehouse Sealed (44:1–3)

44 [1]Then [the man] brought me back [headed outside] the temple complex by way of its outer east gatehouse, but it was shut. [2]And the Lord said to me: This gatehouse must remain shut; it will never again be opened. No one will ever pass through it, because the Lord, the God of Israel, has passed through it. Therefore, it will remain shut. [3]But the *Nasi* [the ruling chieftain], he shall sit in it as chieftain to eat a [ritual] meal before the Lord. He is to enter and leave by way of the porch of the gatehouse.

Notes

44:1. *[Outside] the temple complex.* The term *miqdāš* here refers to the entire walled sanctuary precinct (cf. 43:21; 45:3, 4).

By way of. The phrase indicates direction toward somewhere, here a movement outside the sanctuary precincts through the outer east gate tower (see fig. 2, location A).

44:3. *Nasi.* As elaborated below, Ezekiel's source material in HS describes human wielders of political authority in lineage-based terms: they are *nĕśî'îm* (chieftains), heads of the tribes (Num 10:4 HS). In line with HS, Ezekiel's utopia critiques the Israelite monarchy and reemploys customs and terms remembered as reflecting Israel's premonarchic tribal era (see the Comments).

Porch. The entry porch/narthex of the outer gate towers is described in 40:7–9. Significant for the present passage is that it is oriented on the *inside* of the temple compound (see fig. 3, location P).

Comments

At 43:5 God's spirit transported Ezekiel back into the temple compound, back to the altar square. It is unclear whether the spirit had taken him back into the complex over or through the outer east gate. Certainly, the gateway was still in service as recently as 42:15. Now, the guide brings Ezekiel back to the outer east gate tower, and the prophet

finds that it is shut (44:1). It will remain permanently shut (v. 2). The somewhat cryptic reason is that "the LORD, the God of Israel, has passed through it." What is going on?

Interestingly, the eastern gate of the modern temple mount (the Golden Gate, Arabic *Bab al-Zahabi*), built in the sixth or seventh century CE, is sealed shut. Indeed, Muslims have closed it up three times: in 810, in 1187, and in 1541. This last sealing was by order of Suleiman the Magnificent. The idea of some Bible enthusiasts that the sealed gate fulfills Ezekiel's "prophecy," however, is ill-judged. First, Ezek 44:1–3 is utopian literature, not prediction. Second, the Golden Gate leads to a Muslim platform, not a temple in which the Presence is "sacramentally" secured.

Still, Suleiman apparently shared with Ezekiel 40–48 an appreciation for the strategic and spiritual importance of the eastern gate to the temple mount. Folklore holds that he acted in an effort to crush hopes concerning the gate in Jewish and Christian apocalyptic schemes. Thus, in Zech 14:4–5, Zadokite followers of Ezekiel connect the coming of God at the eschaton with the temple's eastern approach. God draws near aligned with the central "sacred spine" of Ezekiel's temple. Later, traditions associated with Rashbi pinpoint the east gate as the locale where Messiah son of Ephraim will battle Armilaus, the anti-Messiah (Driver and Neubauer 1877, 32). On such bases, burial on the Mount of Olives facing the east gate is prized by some Jews wanting to greet the Messiah at the resurrection (consult Majernik, Ponessa, and Manhardt 2005, 133–34). On the basis of similar ideas, many Christians came to expect a repeat of Jesus's triumphal entry through the east gate at the parousia (Millgram 1990, 213).

Whereas Suleiman purportedly wished to keep the Jewish (and Christian) god (*and* especially this god's messiah) off the temple mount, the aim of 44:1–3 is the opposite. The vision of the utopia prioritizes the enduring residence of the Presence amid Israel. God shuts the outer east gate to reverse permanently the tragedy of the departure of the Presence in 10:19 and 11:23. Although traditional Jewish commentators differ over the interpretation of 44:1–3, Abarbanel and Malbim rightly affirm that the closure of the gate symbolizes that the Presence will never again depart. Actually, Kasher (1998, 195) points out that the verb "symbolize" might be misleading. Here again is the Zadokites' *anthropomorphic* God.

God wants no one opening the gatehouse again, because God has moved into the temple bodily and will now live on earth permanently. The HS ideal of an embodied God dwelling in Israel's midst is finally made concrete. Here is an architectural sealing of the promises in 43:7, 9, "I will dwell [*šākan*] among the children of Israel continually [*ʿôlām*]." Kasher (1998, 195) writes, "This is surely more than a symbolic situation, for the closing of the east gate attests to God's eternal presence in His abode—His Temple, to the lack of any intention on His part to leave the Temple."

Ezekiel reworks, and moves to trump, Babylonian ritual, with which the exiles were familiar. Babylon's Sacred Gate remained shut at all times except during processions of the city's primary god Marduk and his entourage. At least once annually, at the *pīt bābi* ceremony (the ritual "gate opening"), the gate at the eastern end of Marduk's Procession Street opened to allow the god's devotees to carry his cult statue back to his temple (Carvalho 1992, 159). Ezekiel 44 puts a unique spin on this rite.

Ezekiel elevates YHWH far above Marduk. The God of the utopia reserves the power to open and shut temple gates and needs no hauling around by devotees. Whereas enemies, in an ironic reversal of the *pīt bābi,* can easily "parade" Marduk and

Nebo away to foreign exile (see Isa 46:1–2), no troops can again open God's outer east gate. As divine life flows uninterrupted in the ideal utopia (Ezek 47:12), all rehearsals of cyclical fecundity through processions are now irrelevant (cf. Zech 14:8). With the Lord now incontestably cosmic king (cf. Zech 14:9), an annual renewal of nature is obsolete.

With the outer, east gatehouse permanently shut, its entry porch becomes, in effect, a sacred liturgical space for use by the ruling chieftain, the *Nasi* (see fig. 3, location P). Even the chieftain, the civil head of the utopian state, cannot use the gatehouse to enter the temple precincts, but he does enjoy the privilege of eating his sacrificial meals there. The privilege is significant; God's passing has permanently hallowed this locale. A fuller treatment of the role of the *Nasi* at the temple follows later in 45:21–46:12. There, the *Nasi* plays a key liturgical role within a different gatehouse, the *inner* eastern gate tower leading to the inner court and the central altar. But who is this *Nasi*?

Students of Ezekiel have long noted the book's distinctive term for Israel's national leader, the *nāśîʾ* (e.g., 34:24, 37:25, 44:3, 45:7–9), but they have often overlooked Ezekiel's dependence on HS in using the term. HS speaks of Israelite society using distinctive vocabulary, such as *maṭṭeh* (tribe), associated with sociopolitical life before the monarchy (Num 1:49, 2:5, etc.). It describes political authorities in village, lineage terms: they are *nĕśîʾîm* (chieftains), heads of the *tribes* (Num 10:4 HS).

In reviving the old term *nāśîʾ*, Ezekiel does not deny the foothold of Davidic leadership within Israel's destiny. Applying the rubric *nāśîʾ* to a Davidic ruler is not completely idiosyncratic, as Duguid (1994, 14–16) has shown. In 1 Chr 2:10, the figure Nahshon is a *nāśîʾ* with a proto-Davidic role. The prophet does insist, however, that the Davidic line return to its humble and tempered roots in the tribal era. The authority of *nĕśîʾîm* is strictly bounded, especially in all matters concerning the shrine. They are incinerated when they disrespect its holiness latticework (Num 16:2, 35 HS).

The *Nasi* fits within a larger polity structure of Ezekiel's utopia. He is the counterpart of the temple's head priest (see Note *[Head] priest* on 45:19). The prophet Zechariah, in several of the night visions of Zechariah 1–8, picks up a modified version of this diarchic polity. In Zechariah's central vision, two ruling figures flank the temple's golden lampstand. They are "two olive trees, one on the right of the [menorah] bowl and the other on its left" (Zech 4:3). They are those who "stand by the Lord" (Zech 4:14).

In Zechariah 4, the civil and sacral heads of society mirror each other across a vertical axis—the cosmic tree (*Weltbaum*), which takes the form of the temple menorah. In Ezek 44:1–3, a similar mirroring occurs, but along a horizontal axis, the central east-west axis of the sanctuary (the line proceeding through locations F, G, and H in fig. 2). The Zadokites' have their symbolic pole to the west: the square hearth of the altar. The *Nasi* has his symbolic pole to the east: the porch of the eastern outer gate. Beginning with the Sumerian revival, Mesopotamian temples held this sort of central axis, the "sacred spine" of a shrine, as a prominent architectural feature. They situated the cult statue at the end of a linear approach. Thus, Tell Asmar's temple has a tower-flanked door, vestibule, courtyard, ante-cella, and inner sanctuary all in a line culminating in the cult statue (see Carvalho 1992, 35).

The two zones along the sacred spine of Ezekiel's utopian temple complex, civic and priestly, have a comparable surface area. The porch of the outer gate tower is about 459 square feet, and the altar hearth is 441 square feet. The occupants of both zones

face west, toward the divine Presence in the adytum. The Zadokites mount the altar on eastern stairs (43:17). They face the temple building, reversing the sacrilege of Ezek 8:16 (consult Carvalho 1992, 160). The *Nasi* likewise looks toward the temple building from his gatehouse porch. His view along the sacred spine toward the altar and temple façade allows him to feast "before the LORD" (44:3).

Ezekiel 40–48 rejects all preexilic tendencies to reduce the temple to a mere royal chapel (1 Kgs 8:22, 54, 64; 2 Kgs 16:10–18, 23:21; Amos 7:13; Jer 26:10; Ezek 43:8). It repudiates all ancient assumptions that the human monarch was "temple builder" (consult Carvalho 1992, 101; Stevenson 1996, 116). Rabbi Joseph Breuer (1882–1980) reflects on how the *Nasi* should contemplate the gate's closed doors during his sacred meals and be sure never again to offend the Presence (Eisemann 1988, 687). At the same time, however, the utopia grants the *Nasi* two privileged zones of authority along the temple's sacred spine (44:2–3; 46:1–2, 8), the spine along which the divine Presence has passed, permanently hallowing it. Tuell (2009, 326) considers the provision *daring*.

The *Nasi*'s first bailiwick (44:2–3), the outer east gate tower, represents a powerful zone of civic authority with traditional roots in old, village-era Israel. In prestate, premonarchic Israel, the people's lineage heads, who made all of society's key administrative decisions, caucused and rendered judgment *in the gate*. This is the memory, at least, of texts such as Ruth 4:1, Deut 21:19, Job 5:4, and Prov 22:22. The assumption that lineage heads met officially at town gates is supported by the discovery of benches associated with city gates at several sites in Israel and by the association of the term "gate" with the kin groups of lineage-based society in texts such as Ruth 3:11 and Deut 23:16 (this is one connotation of the Akkadian term *bābtu[m]*).

With the rise of societal centralization in Israel, monarchs appropriated jurisdiction at the gateway, co-opting its symbolism (see Cook 2004a, 172–73; 2 Sam 15:2, 19:8; 1 Kgs 22:10; Jer 26:10, 38:7). Thomas Staubli (2014) has recently detailed how the king and queen of the ancient Aramean kingdom of Sam'al (located at Zincirli Höyük) used the outer citadel gate as the venue for a royal sacred banquet. Thus, Stevenson (1996, 120–21), citing arguments of John Wright (2001, 4, 10–19), justly describes the gate as a "power location." This is a helpful corrective to the claim of Jonathan Smith (1987, 61) that Ezekiel's *Nasi* is a weak, "mock king."

Ordinances for Priests and Levites (44:4–31)

44 [4]Then he brought me by way of the north gatehouse to the front of the temple building proper. As I watched—look, the Presence of the LORD was [still] filling the LORD's temple building, and I fell facedown to the ground. [5]Then the LORD said to me: Human One, pay attention, watch closely and listen carefully to everything I tell you concerning all the regulations of the LORD's temple and all its instructions. Pay attention to the access to the temple through all the precinct's portals.

[6]Say to the rebellious ones, to the House of Israel: Message from the Sovereign LORD: I have had it with you! Away with all your detestable practices, O House of Israel, [7][culminating] when you ushered in outsiders [to the priesthood], uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my [temple's raised,] priestly zone to profane it, even my house, as you presented my food, the fat and the blood [of my sacrifices on the altar]. You[, O Israel,] have broken my covenant with all your detestable practices. [8]You have not safeguarded my holy offerings, but had them[, the outsiders,] keep charge of my service in my priestly zone for you.

[9]Message from the Sovereign LORD: As for all outsiders [to the priesthood], no outsiders at all among all Israelites, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter my priestly zones—no outsiders [10]except the Levites, who abandoned me, straying off after their dung when Israel went astray from me. They shall bear their "punishment." [11]They will be ministers in my temple compound, having oversight at the [inner] temple gate towers and serving in the temple complex. [There, in the inner gatehouses,] they will be the ones who will slaughter the entirely burned offerings and sacrifices for the people, and they will be the ones who will attend on the people and minister to them.

[12]Because they ministered to them by conducting their dung worship, and became a sinful obstacle to the House of Israel, therefore I have raised my hand [in oath] against them—utterance of the Sovereign LORD—that they shall bear their "punishment." [13]They may not approach me to officiate for me as priests. They may not

approach any of my holy offerings, the most sacred offerings. They must bear their shame and [the consequences of] their detestable practices, which they have committed, [14]so I am determined to appoint them to preside over the duties of the temple complex, all of its ritual service and all that is done in it.

[15]The Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, however, guarded the duties of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me. They are the ones who will come near to me to serve me; and they will attend on me to present to me the fat and blood [of my sacrifices]—utterance of the Sovereign LORD. [16]They are the ones who will enter my priestly zone; they will approach my table to serve me. They will keep charge of my service.

[17]When exercising their vocation in the inner courtyard, [the priests] must wear only linen clothing. They must wear no wool while serving in the inner courtyard precincts and [when penetrating] to the temple building. [18]Linen turbans must be on their heads and linen undergarments must be about their hips. They must not fasten on anything that makes them sweat. [19]When they exit to the outer courtyard, to the people in the outer court, they must take off their vestments in which they have been ministering. Laying them in the holy chambers, they must put on other clothes so that they do not transmit holiness to the people with their garments.

[20][Priests] shall neither shave their heads nor grow long hair. They must keep their hair carefully trimmed. [21]All priests must refrain from drinking wine before they come into the inner courtyard. [22]They must not marry widows or divorced women. Rather, they may marry only virgins of Israelite descent (and widows who were married to [other] priests). [23]They must teach my people the difference between the holy and the ordinary, and show them the difference between the impure and the pure. [24]In any legal dispute they will serve as judges and decide the case according to the precedent of my rulings. They shall guard my teachings and statutes regarding all my appointed festivals, and they shall set apart my Sabbaths as holy. [25][A priest] must not become defiled by entering the presence of a dead person, although [priests] may defile themselves for a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, or an unmarried sister. [26]After his ritual purification, [the defiled priest] must wait seven days [before resuming temple duties]. [27]The [first] day he reenters the priestly terrace, that is, the inner courtyard, to minister on the priestly terrace, he must offer a purification offering on his own behalf—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

[28]This shall be [the priests'] inheritance share: I am their inheritance portion. You shall allot them no land-holding within Israel; I am their "holding." [29]The grain offerings, the purification offerings, and the reparation offerings—these are [all] theirs to consume. Every offering set apart for God in Israel belongs to them. [30]The choicest first fruits of every kind and every kind of consecrated contribution, all of them, will belong to the priests. You will also give to the priests the first loaves of your dough, in order that a blessing will rest on your homes. [31]The priests must not eat any creature—bird or beast—that died on its own or was torn apart by predators.

Notes

44:4. *Filling.* In 43:5, Ezekiel observed how the Presence "filled" (*mālēʾ*) the temple building. Now he does so again, and again falls prostrate (see 43:3). The accounts may

be doublets, inserted into Ezekiel 40–48 separately. In the text's present canonical form, however, *mālē(ʾ)* in 44:4 may be parsed as a participle, so that the prophet watches the Presence *continue* "filling" the shrine (NIV, NJB, NET), "illuminating" it (VOICE).

44:5. *Concerning.* The preposition *lĕ* here marks the topic of the verb of saying (*IBHS* 211, #53).

44:6. *Had it with you!* The phrase, which recurs in Ezek 45:9, is allusive language here, drawing on Num 16:7 within the HS story of the revolt of Korah (cf. Num 16:3). See the Comments.

44:7. *Outsiders.* The phrase *bĕnê-nēkār* (outsiders) is universally misunderstood in modern English translations. Based on Ezekiel's HS source text, the primary reference is not at all to ethnic foreigners, but to laity who encroach upon the raised inner courtyard of the temple. (See the arguments and discussion below in the Comments.) Rashi understands the *bĕnê-nēkār* to be Israelite apostates, "strangers" in the sense of those "estranged from their Father in heaven." Commenting on 44:9, Radak and Rabbi Altschuler (*Meṣudat David*) similarly apply the phrase to inner-Israelite heretics. On the basis of Ezekiel 44, the Mekilta (Tannaitic midrash to Exodus) defines the term *bennēkār* in Exod 12:43 to include Israelites estranged from God.

Uncircumcised. The motif of the "uncircumcised heart" comes from HS (see Lev 26:41). (Ezekiel 11:19 and 36:26 do not speak of circumcision.) The addition of the phrase "uncircumcised in flesh," however, is an innovation (cf. Ezek 18:31, 36:26, "a new heart *and a new spirit*"). The new language of Ezekiel 44 appears to be a metaphor, pointing to a condition worse than an absence of inward loyalty, the condition of being openly, publicly outside the covenant. The inspiration appears to be Jer 9:26, where nations that actually *did* practice physical circumcision (Jer 9:25) are declared to be *uncircumcised* (*ʿārēl*). Their physical state is completely misleading—it is not a sign of God's covenant: "All these people are circumcised, but have not kept the covenant it symbolizes. None of these people and none of the people of Israel have kept my covenant" (Jer 9:25–26 GNT). Beyond all metaphors, however, there is a sense in which our text *is* about the physically uncircumcised. As discussed in the Comments, on one level the language of Ezekiel 44 reflects an inner-biblical dialog with Isaiah 56. The debate is about actual aliens and whether they can ever become Israelite priests, so in this specific regard Ezekiel 44 *does* engage questions concerning the place of the literally uncircumcised within Israel's temple worship.

Priestly zone. HS can use the term *miqdāš* in a restricted sense, denoting holy areas of the temple (Lev 16:33, 21:23; Num 18:1–3). Likewise, here the term refers to the temple's raised, priestly platform. It is a synonym for *qōdeš* (see Note *Priestly terrace* on 44:27). Thus, the Levites have charge of the "house," the temple compound (v. 14; cf. Num 18:3), and the Zadokites have charge of the *miqdāš,* the inner courtyard (v. 15; cf. Num 18:5). A broader use of the term is excluded, for vv. 9–10 cannot be read as denying all outsiders to the priesthood any access to the sanctuary compound whatsoever! Stevenson (1996, 63 n. 46) notes Milgrom's error in overlooking that *miqdāš* sometimes refers to the inner precincts. MacDonald (2015, 43) correctly judges that Ezek 44:11 uses *miqdāš* with particular reference to the inner court, whose gatehouses the Levites guard.

Even my house. The phrase is an MT plus over against the LXX (Mackie 2015, 92). The NABR omits it entirely. The expansion may intend to assert that violating the *miqdāš,* the temple's inner courtyard, in fact defiles the entire sanctuary compound.

As you presented. The masculine plural suffix on the infinitive addresses Israel as a collective unity. This is in keeping with the HS source narrative, in which the rebellion of 250 community leaders entwines the entire people (Num 16:21). Of course, the priests alone are supposed to represent the community in offering sacrifices on the altar.

My food. The phrases "my house" (cf. Ezek 23:39) and "my food" exemplify the anthropomorphic language of God typical of HS and the Zadokites (see Num 28:2). HS is sharply different from PT in this. Knohl (1995, 30) writes: "PT is very careful not to make any direct connection between the Lord and food; thus it will never speak of 'the Lord's food.' . . . In contrast, HS readily uses the expressions 'the food of your God,' 'the food of his God,' 'the food of their God' (Lev 21:6, 8, 21, 22; 22:25)." Ezekiel here goes even beyond HS in speaking of blood as God's "food" (Gilders 2004, 150). Reference to sacrifices as "food" is sometimes said to be close to "pagan" notions and to appear biblically only as a figure of speech or as "fossilized" terminology inherited uncritically from the past (Haran 1978, 17; Block 1998, 623). As Kasher (1998, 194) notes, this misses that Ezekiel 44 stresses and *amplifies* the boldest of anthropomorphic expressions (44:7, 13, 15–16). For the Zadokites, purposefully anthropomorphic language reinforces a theology of God's localized "incarnation," in which the Presence enters robustly into humanity's conflict with the forces of impurity and sin (i.e., Murk/*Düsternis;* see the Introduction) and creates a dynamic matrix of holiness to sustain people's sanctification and ennoblement.

[My sacrifices]. The Targum's reading "sacrifice" gives the correct paraphrase.

You[, O Israel]. I follow the Greek, Syriac, and Latin versions, which read "you." The MT reads "they." On Israel's collective implication in the Levites' guilt of encroachment, see Note *As you presented* on the earlier part of this verse.

With all your . . . practices. Here I am understanding *ʾel* in the sense of *ʿal* (on account of, *HALOT ʿal* 2; see Block 1997, 99 n. 67, and Milgrom 2012, 135 n. 22). This correlates with the LXX, "with." Alternatively, following BDB 39, *ʾel* 5, one might read, "—this in addition to all your [other] detestable practices" (cf. NLT, NASB, REB n. *a*).

44:8. *Holy offerings.* In HS the noun *qōdeš* (holy thing) refers to edible sacred offerings contributed to the temple and its priests by the Israelites (Lev 22:15; Num 5:9–10, 18:8, all HS) and likely does so here as well (cf. NJPS, NRSV). Also see Note *Holy offerings* on 44:13.

Had them. The MT lacks an object for the verb, but the text is suspect since a paragogic *nun* is extremely rare on the *waw*-consecutive imperfect (see Joüon, sec. 44e). In the original text, the form probably had a final *mem* forming a third masculine plural suffix (see *GKC* sec. 58g). *Mem* and *nun* could be confused in the old Hebrew script.

Keep charge. The responsibility of priests to "keep God's charge" comes from HS (see Lev 22:9–10; Lyons 2009, 165).

44:9–10. *No outsiders except.* On the Hebrew syntax here, see *IBHS* (642–43, sec. 38.6), Arnold and Choi (2003, 155, sec. 4.3.4, m), and the discussion below in the Comments. The Levites are an exception among other *outsiders* (*bĕnê-nēkār*) to the priesthood in that, although they cannot serve in the inner courtyard proper, they can serve at the inner court's gate towers (44:11), slaughtering, butchering, and washing the animal sacrifices. See the various Notes on 40:38–43.

Straying off. The relative clause here is an MT plus, absent in the LXX and Peshitta (Mackie 2015, 112). The addition stresses that Israel and the Levites alike strayed.

Dung. The Hebrew refers to *gillûlîm* (droppings), a term that Ezekiel received from HS (Lev 26:30–31, a background text for Ezek 6:3–6). Although *gillûlîm* is a favorite moniker for "idols" in Ezekiel, the book also uses it in a broader sense connecting to its pungent relationship with *gālāl,* "dung balls" or "turd rolls" (Ezek 4:12, 15; see Ibn Ezra on Lev 26:30; Theocharous 2012, 91). Greenberg (1983, 253) demonstrates that in a text such as Ezek 14:3–7, where the guilty considered themselves "true devotees of YHWH," *gillûlîm* cannot refer to literal idols; rather, *gillûlîm* must be "a rubric for an unregenerate state of mind." Compare 14:5 in the LXX: "hearts that are estranged from me *in their thoughts.*" So too, in 44:10 reference cannot literally be to the worship of "idols" (NRSV, NIV, NABR), which was not the issue in Numbers 16–18, to which Ezekiel refers. It must be to a wayward spiritual orientation, as in Ezek 20:16, 31 and 23:49. Note that in each of these verses, the LXX speaks of a perverse orientation on "vanities," "imaginations."

"Punishment." Back in Ezekiel's source narrative, the Levites deserved punishment for demanding to be altar priests (Num 16:10). They should have been expelled from temple service, but were not. Instead they were restored to their duties. So too, "punishment" here in Ezek 44:10, 12 actually becomes restoration (contrast Strine 2013, 222 n. 172, who follows Wellhausen). This is characteristic of Ezekiel's rhetoric of salvation (see 36:1–11). The duties that Numbers 18 prescribes for the Levites are perilous, but they can be proud to accept the "punishment." Indeed, there is more. The death penalty they receive if outsiders encroach on the inner platform is not simply "their" punishment alone. As Israel's representatives, they bear *Israel's* guilt (see Num 18:23 NABR). They attract divine wrath away from Israel, bearing the people's sin *away* (on the priestly idiom "bearing sin," see Wu 2016, 143–45). In arguing otherwise—that the only sin at issue is the Levites' own—scholars such as Duguid (1994, 77 n. 114) and Milgrom (2012, 152 n. 64) flatten the Zadokites' evocative rhetoric. Can the prophet be bearing only his own sin in 4:4–6, which shares this diction (see Stevenson 1996, 71)? Can Num 18:1, 23 (HS) be referencing only the clerics' own potential failures, when the pronouncements at issue respond to the Israelites' fears that their own sins of trespass will kill them (Num 17:12–13, 18:5)? (For the clerical bearing of others' guilt, see also Exod 28:36–39.)

44:11. *Serving in the temple complex.* The language here is similar to that in 46:24, which refers to service in the outer corners of the sanctuary complex. Thus, *bayit* (house) refers to the entire sacral compound here, as it does in 42:15; 43:10–12, 21; and 44:5, 14. See Note *Temple complex* on 42:15.

Entirely burned offerings and sacrifices. The phrase is an idiom signaling all blood sacrifices (see Lev 17:8; Num 15:3, 5, all HS). Burned offerings are directed entirely to God, whereas other sacrifices are typically shared among humans in some manner. Milgrom (2012, 154 n. 75) points out that a close reading of Ezek 40:39, 42 shows that the term "sacrifices" here is inclusive of the purification and reparation offerings, both expiatory sacrifices. From 40:39–41 it is clear that the Levites will do the slaughtering on eight tables in and around the entry porch of the north inner gatehouse. It is unknown whether slaughtering also occurs at the other inner gates. Removing the role of

slaughtering sacrifices from laypeople is a stricture beyond Leviticus (see Lev 1:5, 11; 3:2; 17:3–5; Knohl 1995, 83 n. 66; Olyan 2000, 138–39 n. 81; Gilders 2004, 151, 156) and reflects Ezekiel's intensified concern with tiered holiness. (I prefer to speak of *intensification* of PT and HS, not contradiction.) The stricture here never gained traction in real practice: 2 Chr 30:17; 35:6, 11; Josephus *Ant.* 3.9.1; m. Zebaḥ 3:1.

Attend on the people and minister to them. Ezekiel 44 lifts the idiom directly from Num 16:9 (HS), which has the same unusual diction with the people, rather than God, as the preposition's object (see Knohl 1995, 82–83). Note that for Moses in Numbers, service to the congregation is a privilege, not a punishment (as implied, e.g., by the MESSAGE, "menial work"). According to Num 16:10, God has "advanced" the Levites (NJPS) by giving them a "special ministry" (NLT), an "honor" (GNT) and "privilege" (VOICE).

44:12. *Sinful obstacle.* The term "obstacle" (NABR: "stumbling block") is known from HS (Lev 19:14). The unique construct phrase "sinful obstacle" appears to be Ezekiel's own invention (see also Ezek 7:19; 14:3, 4, 7; 18:30). Wu (2016, 159) notes that the two elements of the phrase mutually illuminate each other, *mikšôl* denoting a barrier to God and life and *ʿāwōn* denoting guilt that excludes the bearer from cult and life.

Raised my hand. The "lifted hand" formula exemplifies the Zadokites' predilection for anthropomorphic language about God. Strine (2013, 126, 273) argues that the formula is not divine oath language; here it asserts the divine prerogative to determine and execute punishment. For a different use of the formula, see 47:14.

44:13. *Holy offerings.* The phrase "holy offerings," literally "holy things," has just been used in v. 8. As noted, the term is from the HS source. Here, the LXX *Vorlage,* by lifting diction from HS (see Num 5:9 and Lev 22:15), expands the phrase to read "the holy offerings of the children of Israel." As O'Hare (2010, 83) notes, the supplementation intends to specify that it is indeed offerings rather than holy precincts that are at issue.

Most sacred offerings. The reader learned in 42:13, where the phrase occurs twice, that these are the offerings priests eat in the sacristy chambers—the grain offering, the purification offering, and the reparation offering. Ezekiel takes the language from HS in Num 18:9–10, which speaks specifically of the same three offerings.

Shame. On "disgrace-shame" here as something potentially constructive, see Note *Bear their shame* on 39:26. Here in 44:13, where the Levites are restored to their ideal state as envisioned in Num 18:1–7 (HS), the text uses the language of "shame" in an ironically positive sense.

44:14. *I am determined.* On the subordinate and volitional force of the verb *wĕnātattî,* see *IBHS* 532, sec. 32.2.3 d, #18.

Preside over the duties. The language comes from HS (Num 18:4). HS texts such as Num 3:28, 32 and 31:30, 47 assign the role specifically to the Levites, overseen by the priests. The conspicuous phraseology, which repeats the root *šmr,* emphasizes the role's critical importance to Ezekiel. In Zadokite theology, maintaining God's tiered lattice of holiness is crucial, particularly within temple strata. The Zadokites properly guarded God's shrine in the past (Ezek 44:15), and in the utopian temple, Zadokites and Aaronides perform parallel guarding roles in the temple's inner court (see 40:45–46, 44:16).

Temple complex. As in 44:11, *bayit* (house) refers broadly to the entire temple area (see Note *Serving in the temple complex* on 44:11; Stevenson 1996, 60).

Ritual service. The Hebrew term includes such ceremonial functions as those of 46:24. By the exilic era, *ʿăbōdâ* was on the verge of transitioning from meaning physical labor to meaning cultic service. It appears already to have this sense in Num 18:4, 7 (HS), Ezekiel's source text here. Translations such as "chores" (NRSV, NJPS), "maintenance work" (NLT), and "menial work" (GNT) are too narrow in the present context. Numbers 18:7 (HS) speaks, rather, of a "special privilege of service" (NLT).

44:15. *They are the ones.* The repeated "they" in the Hebrew of vv. 15–16 emphasizes how the Zadokites alone have the greatest access to the Presence within the complex (*IBHS* 293; Stevenson 1996, 56).

Come near to me to serve me. The vocabulary here parallels that in Ezek 40:46.

44:16. *My table.* It is either the table of the bread in 41:22 that is in mind (Carvalho 1992, 154), or this is an alternative way of designating the main altar. MacDonald (2015, 61) observes that since 44:16 is drawing directly on Num 18:5 (HS), it has the main altar in mind. Block (1998, 645) is correct that to call the altar God's table would be not only to stress how the Zadokites serve God in God's own home (44:16) but also to make them God's dinner guests, eating God's own food (see 44:7, 29–30).

44:17. *Exercising their vocation.* The Hebrew idiom "enter the gateway" can mean to have local rights within a place or precinct (BDB *šaʿar* 2. a), to live or work within a site or town as part of a cadre or lineage (consult *HALOT šaʿar* 4. B; see Gen 23:10, 18; 34:24; Deut 5:14, 23:16; Ruth 3:11; Job 29:7; also cf. Ps 87:2, Isa 14:31).

Serving in the . . . precincts. The Hebrew literally reads "while they serve in the gates." As in the preceding note, the term *šaʿar* (gate) here indicates a place of vocation. The NLT correctly renders the idiom "while on duty in the inner courtyard."

[Penetrating] to the temple building. The Hebrew literally reads "houseward," meaning "inward" (BDB *bayit* 7).

44:19. *Holy chambers.* These are the sacristies of 42:1–14. The priests must leave their vestments there, proceed out of the east entrance to the area, walk past the room for washing sacrifices, and then exit the priestly platform through one of the inner gates. See the discussion and Images referenced in Note *Façade* on 42:2. Verses 13–14 of chapter 42 have already stipulated that the priests must leave their vestments in these chambers before leaving the inner courtyard.

So that. On the syntax of the "negative consecutive clause" here, see *GKC* sec. 166a (so NRSV, REB, NABR, NIV, and most other modern English translations).

44:22. *Rather.* On the syntax of an adversative clause after a negation, see Joüon, sec. 172 c.

44:27. *Priestly terrace.* The term *qōdeš* has several meanings within Ezekiel 40–48 but seems to refer to the temple's raised inner courtyard here, as it does in 42:14 (also see 42:13, 44:19, 46:19). The two prepositional phrases here are thus apposed (see O'Hare 2010, 150).

44:28. *I am their inheritance.* The language here is from Num 18:20 (HS). Although Ezek 45:4 does allow the priests to occupy religious property, they are on the Lord's land, not their own (Allen 1990, 265). See the Comments.

I am their "holding." On the distinction between an "inheritance" and a "holding," see Note *Holding* on 45:5.

44:29. *Offering set apart.* The term *ḥērem* does not have its common destructive connotations here but refers to gifts irrevocably consecrated to the Lord (e.g., see Lev 27:

21, 28–29). Use of the term reinforces Ezekiel's holiness system, in which the sphere of the profane is not allowed to encroach on what is, or has become, holy. To treat the holy as profane is to desecrate it and bring guilt (Lev 22:14–16 HS; cf. 1 Cor 11:29–30).

44:30. *Choicest first fruits.* On the sense "best," "choicest," see *IBHS* 271 n. 30.

Consecrated contribution. The term *tĕrûmâ* refers to specially dedicated land later in the vision (e.g., in 45:1, 6–7) but also has the more usual sense found here of an offered *contribution* (NJPS)—one that is "lifted," or "gifted" (cf. Akkadian *rāmu* III), out of profane life. It is removed from the mundane sphere for donation to the holy shrine (Ezek 45:13 has both the noun and cognate verb, *rûm*). The Ugaritic Baal epic uses the cognate noun *trmmt* in speaking of "bread of contribution" offered to the god Shapash. Numbers 18:8, 19 uses the noun in a general sense, referring to all kinds of offerings for priestly consumption, and Ezek 44:30 does the same (see NRSV: "every offering of all kinds").

All of them. At first blush the Hebrew seems to add a redundant phrase: "from all your contributions." This phrase may stress the inclusion of every single offering (NJPS, CEB) or perhaps indicate a pick of the choicest contributions from all that is offered (NABR).

Comments

Continuing to "walk the labyrinth," to "trace the mandala," the reader yet again journeys with Ezekiel to the center of the temple complex. (As of 44:1–3, the prophet had been outside the inner courtyard, visiting the compound's outer east gatehouse.) Circumambulating the sanctuary pathways, veering off toward the north, and then in toward the sacred center, we again practice the presence of the Holy at the center of existence. We again immerse ourselves in a matrix of holy relationality (see Comments on 42:1–14).

The return to the center in 44:4 is a literary device, a *resumptive repetition.* In v. 4 the text of the vision repeats the scene narrated in 43:1–5. (The two texts are doublets, likely of separate origin. Gese [1957, 31–33, 108–23] viewed 43:1–5 as a very late addition to the temple vision, but Rudnig [2000, 364–65], Konkel [2001, 236–43], Tuell [2009, 281], Wagner [2012, 285], and others see 44:4 as the later of the two texts.) The effect of the device of repetition in the text's current canonical shape is to form literary "bookends" bracketing 43:1–44:3 as a coherent description of temple consecration.

Between the lines of 43:1–44:3 lies a three-part consecration ceremony: (1) A "consecration" of the temple building occurs as the divine Presence inhabits it (43:1–5; cf. 1 Kgs 8:3–11; consult Greenberg 1984, 194). (2) Priests appear in 43:19 with a "virtual" investiture in hand. The verse's language alludes to 40:45–46 and 44:15–16, which usher in, from Israel's hoary past, a faithful priesthood ready for altar service. (3) A seven-day consecration of the altar occurs in 43:18–27 and is central to the passage. The commissioning activates the holiness matrix emanating out from the central "square" of the temple complex (see Comments on 43:13–27).

The resumptive repetition in 44:4 brings Ezekiel again directly before God, whose presence continues "filling" the shrine (see Note *Filling* on 44:4). As the Presence sets down, no king takes God's hand, unlike the case with Marduk arriving at the *akitu* temple (Stevenson 1996, 52–53; Halpern 1981, 54). Instead, the Presence

confronts Ezekiel in utter sovereignty and independence, thus "flooring" the prophet (cf. Num 16:22 HS).

God then personally delivers revelation; the next several chapters are a collection of revealed temple ordinances. Ezekiel receives the rules in the role of a prophetic messenger; the messenger formula appears in 44:6, 9; 45:9, 18; and 46:1, 16. As Wagner (2012, 285) notes, the ordinances reveal the behavior required of God's people given a Presence-filled sanctuary that must never again suffer pollution. They emphasize the responsibility of this people, now with God in its midst, to live in permanent purity.

Ezekiel 44:4–21 places personnel in the sacred zones that the prophet has toured in chapters 40–42. God reveals the clerical hierarchy to minister in the sanctuary's various precincts. The hierarchy contains specifics about the Zadokites and new strictures in ritual choreography and protocol that undergird and intensify the understandings of HS. First and foremost, priests and Levites must not serve together in the holy precinct in front of the temple building. Only Aaronides and Zadokites are permitted in this zone; the Levites have roles in the inner gatehouses and the outer court. What an intensification over against a text such as Num 16:9 (HS), where the Levites maintain the shrine itself!

Perhaps the most fascinating and misunderstood section of the passage is 44:6–16, which justifies Ezekiel's ordinances about priests using a two-part prophetic oracle of judgment. In Cook 1995b, I argued that the nature of this justification is roundly misconstrued. I defended the view that 44:6–16 does *not* reference incidents in history. It does *not* laud Zadokite performance at the preexilic temple, as commentators maintain. That is not possible; Ezekiel condemns that performance (e.g., 22:26); he never celebrates it. Rather, 44:6–16 is pure inner-biblical interpretation that reinstates a Zadokite vision already present in HS. My primary "foil" was Julius Wellhausen, a major originator of modern historical biblical scholarship.

In what has become a truism among historical critics, Wellhausen (1885, 121–67) traced a development of Israel's priesthood through a vision of inclusive priestly service at Jerusalem in Deuteronomy 18, through a notice in 2 Kings 23 attesting to the failure of the vision, and on into Ezekiel 44, which, he argued, provides a moral rationale for the failure and new legislation codifying the elevation of the Zadokites that followed in its aftermath. Ezekiel, Wellhausen claimed, "merely drapes the logic of facts with a mantle of morality" (124). It was out of the de facto collapse of the vision of Deuteronomy 18, according to Wellhausen, that the distinction in the P source between sacrificing priests and nonsacrificing Levites arose.

Wellhausen's view is wrong on many levels, which cannot all be treated in the context of an exegetical commentary on Ezekiel. A few essential criticisms should be noted, however. Take, for example, his idea that 2 Kgs 23:9 reports the failure in practice of Deuteronomy's provision for the Levites of the country shrines ("high places"). Deuteronomy 18 wants them welcomed into a new, centralized worship at Jerusalem. All English translations understand 2 Kgs 23:9 as Wellhausen did, along the lines of the NRSV, "The priests of the high places, however, did not come up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem [as Deut 18:1–8 envisioned], but ate unleavened bread among their kindred." Does the Hebrew say this? A quick look shows the answer to be "no," it does not.

In 2 Kgs 23:9 a *kî ʾim* clause follows a negative statement expressed with an imperfect verb. This syntax signals an expression leaning on an "unless and until" clause. Here, the initial negative statement does not express a general fact but, as Arnold and Choi (2003, 155, sec. 4.3.4, m) explain, a situation that is *reversed* after something specific happens. In 2 Kgs 23:9, the Levites *do* eventually serve at the Lord's altar in Jerusalem—after they have proved themselves to King Josiah by participating ("eating unleavened bread") in his new centralized Passover in Jerusalem. We may render the verse as follows: "The priests of the high places did not go up [to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem] until they ate unleavened bread among their brethren [fellow Israelites]." Wellhausen was mistaken. Ezekiel 44 is *not* a moral justification of historical contingency.

Ezekiel 44 cannot be referencing events of history, such as those to which scholars following Wellhausen have tried to link it. (For the standard list of suggested referents for the "outsiders" of Ezekiel 44, with bibliography and helpful critique, see Block 1998, 622 n. 49; MacDonald 2015, 23–26. Candidates include the *netinim,* Gibeonites, Egyptians, Carites, and Midianites.) Ezekiel 44 is unrelated to a downgrade of the Levites' status after their "rejection" in 2 Kgs 23:9. It can have nothing to do with a faithful Zadokite ministry in Jerusalem (see Ezek 22:26). Scholarly ink has been spilled in vain searching for historical events like these behind Ezekiel 44. There simply are none.

The only workable referent for Ezekiel 44 is a story in the Pentateuch—a tale of pure heroes and villains, not one about history's moral ambiguities. Ezekiel's book elsewhere draws on HS stories in this manner (e.g., 24:15–27 draws on Lev 10:1–7). In the narrative we are looking for, both Levites *and* laity must err (vv. 6–8, 10). The error must offend God's holiness by granting cultic "outsiders" access to the altar (vv. 7–9). In all this, the Zadokite priesthood, or their ancestors, Aaron and Eleazar, must keep faithful (vv. 15–16; on the Zadokites' links with Eleazar, see the Introduction). The incident must be one understood to belong to the past, one to which Ezekiel 44 can look back. It cannot be a future hope, such as that expressed in the oracle of Isa 56:6–7 (against MacDonald 2015, 32; see the discussion below). Finally, the offense against God's tiered holiness must be one that is committed at Israel's main shrine. In Ezek 44:7, God surely speaks of the one unique shrine housing the indivisible divine Presence.

Only *one* story, a story in HS, fits these criteria: the tale in Num 16:1–18:7 of the rebellion in the wilderness of the Levites of Korah's line. Beginning with the phrase "I have had it with you!" in Ezek 44:6, which quotes Num 16:7, Ezekiel repeatedly gives us allusive language pointing to the tale of the revolt (Cook 1995b). The end of Ezek 44:11 is practically lifted from Num 16:9. Note especially how Ezek 44:17–31 follows up the story of the Levites' rebellion with clerical ordinances in exactly the same manner as the ordinances of Numbers 18 follow up the story of Korah's revolt in Numbers 16–17.

The majority of the linguistic resonances of Ezekiel 44 are with Numbers 18. Numbers 18 and its ordinances, however, connect inextricably with the events of Numbers 16–17. Numbers 17:12–13 makes this abundantly clear. The raison d'être of Numbers 18 is "that wrath may never again come upon the Israelites," as it just has during the Korah revolt (Num 18:5). We are on sure ground in taking Ezek 44:4–16 as inner-biblical reuse of Num 16:1–18:7. As MacDonald (2015, 45–47) shows, the direction of dependence cannot be the reverse.

In the HS story, a contingent of rebels directly challenges the Zadokite ideal of hierarchical holiness (Num 16:3). As in Ezek 44:6, 10, the company includes *both* Levites (Num 16:10) *and* laity (Num 16:2). Their thinking includes the belief that Levites may offer sacrifices (*qārab;* Num 16:5) just as the priests do. (Numbers 16:10 and 16:40 are clear about who may approach God with offerings—only the priests, the "descendants of Aaron," among whom the Zadokites count themselves.) Moses tests the Levites' contention by having them attempt to offer incense "before the LORD" (Num 16:7, 16–17), that is, in the altar zone, before the temple porch (Num 16:18–19, Ezek 43:24).

To say that the test does not go well is an understatement. The Levites are *outsiders* (*zār,* Num 16:40; 18:4, 7) over against the line of Aaron (with which the Zadokites self-identify) and must not encroach on the priests' sacral zone. *Zār* can mean "ethnic foreigner" (cf. Isa 61:5, Jer 5:19, Prov 20:16, Job 19:15), but here in HS it indisputably means a non-Aaronide (see, e.g., Lev 22:10, Num 16:40). Ezekiel 44 substitutes the phrase *ben-nēkār,* which like *zār,* can mean a foreigner, but that is not the primary meaning here. Ezekiel 44 uses *nkr* in its sense referring to those who are outside one's kin and family (cf. Gen 31:15, 42:7; 1 Kgs 14:5; Pss 69:8; 144:7, 11; Prov 20:16; 26:24; 27:2, 13; Job 9:15; Qoh 6:2). Jeremiah 19:4 uses the root to mean "profane," *alien* to the holy. Against MacDonald (2015, 26), both Numbers 16–18 and Ezekiel 44 are, in the first instance, concerned with the access of non-Aaronide *laity* to the altar, not of ethnic foreigners. (On the phrase "uncircumcised of flesh" in 44:7, 9, see NOTE *Uncircumcised* on 44:7. On the dialog of Ezekiel 44 with Isaiah 56 over actual ethnic foreigners, see below.)

In Num 18:1–3 and Ezek 44:7–9, the inner court, with its altar yard, is termed the *miqdāš* (NRSV: "sanctuary"). No laity (*zār;* NRSV: "outsider") may approach priests here (Num 18:4; cf. Ezek 44:7). As Ezek 44:16 insists, only priests may enter the *miqdāš*—what God calls "my priestly zone." Only Zadokites "will approach my table to serve me." According to our story in HS, Eleazar son of Aaron, ancestor of the Zadokites, flawlessly ministered within this zone, respecting all God's holiness rubrics (Num 16:36–50). It is to his faithfulness within the altar zone that Ezek 44:15–16 must be referring.

Most English translations have missed what I have just described as the specialized use of *miqdāš* in Num 18:1–3 and in Ezek 44:7–9, 15–16. The translators have supposed that the entire sanctuary complex is in view. There can be no doubt, however, that a narrower, restricted meaning is in play. Ezekiel 44:16 *cannot* exclude all outsiders to the priesthood from the temple complex as a whole! We know that Levites and laypeople are welcome in the outer court. *Miqdāš* here can refer only to the raised priestly platform and its altar yard. HS can use the term in a restricted sense, denoting holy areas of the temple (Lev 16:33, 21:23). Ezekiel 45:4 is another verse where *miqdāš* is used narrowly of the inner court. The verse may even use *miqdāš* in three different ways!

Whereas HS forbids the Levites contact with both the altar and the furnishings of God's shrine (Num 18:3), Ezekiel 44 goes further. Here, Levites may not even pass beyond any of the three inner gate towers guarding access to the inner courtyard (see Ezek 40:44–46, 42:14, 43:19, 44:19, 45:4, 46:2). Following Stevenson (1996, 58, 66), Block (1998, 633) shares this view: "The Levites were authorized to perform guard duty

at the gates of the [inner court of the] sanctuary [44:11], the Zadokites could go right inside."

English translations also all support the pernicious view that Ezekiel 44 excludes non-Israelite "foreigners" from the utopian temple complex. My translation of 44:5 differs sharply from the command in the NRSV: "Mark well those who may be admitted to the temple and all those who are to be excluded from the sanctuary." So also, I render 44:9 differently from the NRSV: "No foreigner . . . of all the foreigners who are among the people of Israel, shall enter my sanctuary." As noted above, against these renderings, I am sure that the primary reference of *ben-nēkār* in Ezekiel 44 is *not* to foreigners. (And if foreigners are in mind, then they are barred from only the priestly, inner courtyard.)

Note in particular how the Hebrew syntax at the junction of v. 9 and v. 10 includes the Levites among the *bĕnê-nēkār.* Just as at 2 Kgs 23:9, I understand there to be an "exceptive" clause here (such syntax is marked by a *kî ʾim* clause following a negative statement expressed with an imperfect verb; see *IBHS* 642–43, sec. 38.6). The Levites are *an exception among other outsiders* in that, although they cannot serve at the altar or the inner courtyard proper, they can serve at the inner courtyard's gate towers (44:11), slaughtering, butchering, and washing the animals (see the various Notes on 40:38–43).

The HS narrative to which Ezek 44:6–16 refers has nothing to do with ethnic foreigners. In referring to the "outsider" (*zār,* Num 16:40; 18:4, 7), Ezekiel's source narrative means a person "who is not of the descendants of Aaron" (Num 16:40). An incursion of non-Israelites is not at issue. When Num 18:7 and Ezek 44:7–8 condemn and proscribe bringing outsiders into the altar zone, it is first and foremost the Levites and Reubenites of Korah's rebellion whom the authors have in mind. The Zadokites, according to Lev 22:18 (HS), had no issue with resident aliens entering outer temple areas with offerings. Given the inclusiveness with which the utopian vision elsewhere treats foreigners, their exclusion from Israel's worship here in Ezekiel 44 seems most improbable. Specifically, Ezek 47:22–23 insists that Israel treat as native-born all "resident aliens who are living among you and who have had descendants born here." Milgrom (2012, 44) is wrong that the temenos "is filled solely with penitent Israelites."

Beyond the connection with Numbers 16–18, Ezekiel 44 contains another set of echoes. These echoes represent the Zadokites' dialog with an Aaronide vision of priestly inclusivity, a vision in Isaiah 56 and 66. Isaiah 66, a postexilic text sharing much diction with Ezekiel 44, bears an exceptionally welcoming attitude toward foreigners. Isaiah 66:21 seems even to speak of opening the priesthood to them: "I'll even take some of the foreigners [*wĕgam-mēhem*] and make them priests and Levites" (my paraphrase). The rhetoric of the Hebrew strains to persuade the reader that God will take priests "*even* from them." Such clerical inclusivity diametrically opposes the Zadokite position of priestly hierarchy in Num 18:7 (HS). Ezekiel 44 might well be expected to react strongly against Isaiah 66!

Isaiah 56:4–7 prepares for the apocalyptic suspension of clerical boundaries in Isaiah 66. It applies to foreigners language limited to Levites in Numbers 18. The combination of the verbs *lwh* and *šrt* in Isa 56:6 occurs elsewhere only in Num 18:2. The former verb looks like a wordplay in Isa 56:6, suggesting that the foreigners are "Leviting" themselves. The verb *šrt* in Isa 56:6 signals worship of the Lord and calls to mind

acts of temple service (as in Isa 60:7, 61:6). Tellingly, the Dead Sea Scrolls at 1QIsa[a] omit this verb, probably because of consternation at any implication that Gentiles might serve as priests.

Third Isaiah's inclusive perspective here appears to develop organically out of the universalism of Aaronide (PT) portions of the Pentateuch. Texts such as Gen 28:3 (PT) envision Jacob spawning not only the worship congregation of Israel but an entire cultic communion (*qāhāl*) of peoples. Genesis 35:11 (PT) is parallel. The verse foretells Jacob one day convening an international worship congregation (*qĕhal gôyim*).

In a recent monograph, MacDonald (2015, 32) has shown that Ezekiel 44, in its present form, postdates Isaiah 56 and vigorously interacts with it. Over against Third Isaiah's cryptic support for priesting foreigners, MacDonald understands Ezekiel 44 to lay down clear prohibitions of any such thing. Outsiders are elsewhere always termed *zār* in Ezekiel, but Ezek 44:7, 9 picks up Third Isaiah's term *ben-nēkār.* Whereas Third Isaiah has a positive interest in the *bĕnê-nēkār* and in their prospective cultic service (*šrt*) of God (Isa 56:6; 60:7, 10; 61:5–6; MacDonald 2015, 33), Ezekiel 44 bans them from priestly service. The close relationship between Ezekiel 44 and Isaiah 56, MacDonald shows (131), was known at Qumran, where the two texts were read together.

MacDonald has made solid contributions in understanding Ezekiel 44, but he pushes his argument too far. I have recognized the definite influence of Isaiah 56 on Ezekiel 44 around the question of foreigners' participation in worship (Cook 1995b, 207–8; see MacDonald 2015, 34 n. 102). While helpfully extending this observation, MacDonald simultaneously misses that Ezekiel 44 excludes *all outsiders,* not just non-Israelites, from the temple's inner courtyard, the *miqdāš* zone (see Note *Priestly zone* on 44:7). His study is not clear that in Ezekiel 44 the same hierarchical strictures that keep foreigners out of the *miqdāš* zone apply equally to all lay Israelites and even to Levites.

Ezekiel 44 is not xenophobic or even ethnocentric but works to define a bailiwick for the Levites, just as Numbers 18 works specifically to fend off any repeat of the Levitical encroachment in Numbers 16–17. By understanding that ethnic foreigners are the focal concern in Ezekiel 44, as in Isa 56:4–7, MacDonald cannot account for why the text has so much to say about the Levites' place in temple service (e.g., MacDonald 2015, 40, 51). For him, the Levites seem to come into Ezekiel 44 in an "unexpected" way. Actually, the Levites were part of the rebellion of Numbers 16–17 from the start. Ezekiel 44 *is* coherent.

My claim that Ezekiel 44 is actually at peace with foreigners contradicts a commonplace idea of biblical scholarship and may be met with consternation. For examples of interpreters who see the text as antiforeigner, or even xenophobic, consult Eichrodt (1970, 564–65), Zimmerli (1983, 453–54), Niditch (1986, 219), Jonathan Smith (1987, 62–63), Stevenson (1996, 131, 140), Schmidt (2001, 186), Konkel (2001, 286), and Albertz (2003, 371).

Starting with v. 17, Ezekiel 44 shifts from prophetic speech to a catalog of ordinances for priests. Many of the rules apply broadly to all Aaronides, not just specifically to the Zadokites, even though vv. 15–16 have been speaking only of the latter group. In fact, we know from 44:21 that the text now has in mind "all priests" (*kol-kōhēn*). Apparently vv. 4–16 and vv. 17–31, originally distinct Zadokite documents, are imperfectly joined. The editors have spliced them together with little adaptation, leaving an untidy literary seam. This explains the sudden shift in terminology, for example, how *ša*ʿ*ar*

(gate) now replaces *miqdāš* as the term for the inner court (see Note *Serving in the . . . precincts* on 44:17).

The rules of vv. 17–31 cover priestly clothing and its storage, priests' personal appearance, their sobriety, and their marriageability. Priestly duties include instructing Israel in holiness and purity, performing judicial and arbitration roles, and administering Israel's observance of festivals and Sabbaths. Unlike the laity, priests are proscribed from participating in many funerary customs and from owning hereditary land. Instead of living off their own harvests, they take their meals from people's offerings at the temple. Lastly, priests are forbidden to eat carrion, the unclean flesh of dead animals.

Ezekiel 44:17–18 stipulates that, when on duty on the priestly terrace, priests must wear linen clothes, the garment of choice for heavenly beings (Ezek 9:2, 10:2; Dan 10:5) and temple personnel (Exod 35:25, 39:27–29, both HS; 1 Chr 15:27). Linen's plain white appearance distinguishes priests from the laity and visibly marks them, and their inner courtyard, as pure and unblemished. The symbolism reinforces the utopia's stepped holiness. Members of the Qumran community later donned linen garments for their ritual meals, considered a substitute for temple sacrifices. They also described their battle attire at the apocalypse as "byssus," "white," and "linen" (War Scroll 7.9–10, Cave 1).

The end of v. 18 specifies that avoiding perspiration is the prime reason for wearing linen rather than wool. Linen, a fabric of flax, feels exceptionally cool and fresh in hot weather. Ezekiel does not specify why priests must avoid perspiration, but priestly symbolism associates other forms of human "leakiness" with decay and chaos, including pus, semen, and menstrual blood (Lev 15:1, 16, 19, 32–33; see Neusner 1973, 18–22).

The Zadokites likely deemed sweat symbolically antithetical to the pure, Edenic realm of the inner courtyard. According to Gen 3:19 sweaty labor was at first unknown in Eden but arose in association with God's curse. Cross-culturally, sweat has associations with taxing exertion, discomfort, odor, and illness. Herodotus reports that Egyptian cult officials were constantly cleaning their linen clothes (*Hist.* 2.37).

Linen clothes are essential in PT's instructions about altar service and the Day of Atonement (Exod 28:39, 42–43). For priests, up on the altar working with sacrifices, linen undergarments and vestments are specifically requisite (Lev 6:10–11). On the Day of Atonement, the chief priest, when entering the shrine proper, must wear holy linen undergarments, tunic, sash, and turban (Lev 16:4, 23, 32). As is characteristic in Ezekiel 40–48, the utopian vision intensifies earlier PT regulations by applying to the entire inner courtyard instructions originally focused more narrowly and specifically.

Ezekiel 44:19 expands the earlier mention in 42:13–14 that priestly vestments are "holy" and must be kept within the inner courtyard. They must be stored in the north and south sacristy chambers. Providing additional information, 44:19 now elaborates that holiness is a sort of invisible plasma, communicable through direct physical contact.

Contagious holiness is not Ezekiel's invention but occurs in HS. In Lev 6:18, 27 (MT 6:11, 20), for example, sacrificial meat has holy power. Atonement issues from an animal sacrifice, whose meat *sanctifies* the one consuming it (Exod 29:33). The altar and other temple furnishings likewise transmit holiness (Exod 29:37, 30:29; Num 16:38). Their holiness is not innate but imputed by the nearby divine Presence (Exod 29:42–43

HS). Leviticus 21:23 (HS) speaks of the Presence continually sanctifying adytum and altar.

In Zadokite thinking, the holiness seeping from altar and adytum may be either negative or positive in effect (see Note *These clothes are holy* on 42:14 and the Comments on 42:1–14). The NLT of Ezek 44:19 captures the present emphasis on the contagious *menace* of holiness (cf. Num 16:35): The priests must store their vestments "so they do not endanger anyone by transmitting holiness to them" (also cf. the GNT).

While negative holiness is the emphasis of 44:19, the vibrant, substantive holiness presupposed by the verse is also a potential positive force. The positive potential is portrayed in Zech 14:20–21. Zechariah's Zadokite vision looks forward in the spirit of Ezekiel 40–48 to holiness's eschatological permeation of the land. The sanctity of the temple, deriving from the Presence, extends to horses' bells and to every cooking pot in Judah. Emanating from the temple, holiness seeps out of Jerusalem to embrace the entire land. The text is of a piece with the celebration in Zech 14:8 of the holy miracle river of Ezekiel 47.

Positive holiness is not only about enabling pristine temple worship (Zech 14: 21), but also about transforming, enlivening, and ennobling life. Thus, in Num 17:1–11 (HS) proximity to God's terrestrial presence infuses Aaron's staff with fecundity. The staff comes alive after a night in the shrine, sprouting, budding, blossoming, and bearing ripe almonds (Num 17:8 [MT 17:23]). Rashi's comments leave no doubt he believes that increasing proximity to the temple's holy center means increasing exposure to vitality.

Rashbam notices a rhetorical emphasis on a progressive blossoming of life in Num 17:8. Ezekiel 47:1–12 displays similar rhetoric, describing an expanding, deepening river of life. Brimming with expansive life, it flows out from the adytum and altar to bring the land of Judah to bloom. Altar and river each reinforce the work of the other (see Stevenson 1996, 142). The altar attracts impurity, expels it from the land, and seeps holiness. The river heals the land of sterility and infuses it with life to the point that sacred trees sprout. Life and holiness trump chaos and death.

The temple-centered matrix of holiness transforms the land and also Israel's people. The Zadokites stress that sanctification of the people should result from God's presence among them. The idea is most directly expressed using the *piel* inflection of the root *qādaš* (see Exod 31:13; Lev 21:8, 22:32, all HS; Ezek 20:12). The reason that God's shrine is in the midst of Israel is to grow the people in holiness (Ezek 37:28).

Arrayed about the Presence in the temple, everyone should begin absorbing effusions of divine holiness. The process, however, is neither mechanical nor automatic. It was the one staff of the tribe which God chose that sprouted in God's presence, while others did not (Num 17:5, 8 HS). God's election is crucial in sanctification, as is the discipline of observing covenantal rites and statutes (Exod 31:13, Lev 20:8, both HS).

The rules for priests on duty continue in vv. 20–24, a set of ordinances closely related to Lev 10:6–11. The latter passage represents an HS editorial expansion of PT material (see Knohl 1995, 51–52). Verse 20 focuses on the care of hair, which in Israelite culture directly relates to funerary customs, which priests generally must shun.

At Lev 10:6–7 Moses warns priests against letting loose the hair, a sign of mourning punishable by death. Shaving the head is also a mourning practice (Ezek 7:18). The antipathy of holiness to death was clear in the treatment of dead-offerings and funerary

monuments in Ezekiel 43 (see COMMENTS on 43:1–12). Shortly, at v. 25, Ezekiel 44 will confirm the Zadokite view—priests must make every effort to avoid contact with the realm of death. They may come near a dead person only if it is "a father, a mother, a son, a daughter, a brother, or an unmarried sister" (as in Lev 21:1–4 HS).

Holiness, we have repeatedly seen, is fundamentally oriented on life. Milgrom (1991, 46) rightly insists that in the priestly vision, "holiness stands for life." In this regard, Ezek 44:20 also parallels Lev 21:5–6, 10 (HS; see Lyons 2009, 165), which forbids priests from shaving their heads and cutting their bodies (cf. the reference in Lev 19:28 to "gashes in your flesh for the dead").

Ezekiel 44 takes HS rules about funerary practices and expresses them as more general rules about grooming. MacDonald (2015, 70) notes that this confirms the priority of HS: "It is readily apparent how a focus on the instructions about hair resulted in a loss of reference to mourning. It is difficult to see how the rules about hair would have developed into rules about mourning." The more general focus on grooming creates a smooth transition in 44:17–24 between issues of dress and grooming inside the inner court (vv. 17–19) and wider norms concerning priestly lifestyle and service (vv. 21–24).

Verse 21 prohibits drinking alcohol before entering the inner courtyard. Just so, Lev 10:6–9 (HS) places a prohibition against wine after Moses's command that priests not bewail the recently deceased. Intoxication simply does not fit the sanctity of the sanctuary. After all, alcohol leads to brawls (Prov 20:1), seeing double, and slurred speech (Prov 23:33). Obviously, none of this is tolerable on the priestly terrace.

The prohibition of priests from marrying widows and divorced women in v. 22 parallels HS at Lev 21:7, 14–15 (see Lyons 2009, 165). Interestingly, Ezekiel makes no mention of the concern of HS that the high priest must marry "a virgin from his own clan" (Lev 21:14 NLT). Note too that v. 22 adds to the HS rules the exception that priests may marry other priests' widows. In both cases, v. 22 evinces the inclusivity and outreach found elsewhere in Ezekiel 40–48 (e.g., 47:22–23). There was no reason not to be generous in allowing Levirate marriages with priests' widows. As Konkel (2001, 120) notes, children conceived with a priest's widow are immune from doubts about priestly lineage.

The dependence of Ezekiel 44 on Lev 10:6–11 (HS) continues in v. 23, where the vocabulary comes almost verbatim from Lev 10:10 (also cf. Lev 20:25). The Zadokites held as fundamental to the role of the priesthood the task of teaching the people to distinguish between the holy and the common, between the ceremonially pure and the impure. Earlier in the book, Ezek 22:26 castigated the priests precisely for their failure to distinguish the holy and the common, the pure and the impure. The same verse accuses the priests of disregarding God's Sabbaths, a key topic in the next verse of Ezekiel 44.

Verse 24 assigns to the priests the role of judge in the people's legal controversies. It also makes them responsible for guarding the people's appropriate observance of the divinely appointed festivals and for keeping the Sabbath holy (cf. Lev 23:1–3 HS). Tellingly, v. 24 employs the distinctive HS idiom in which God speaks of "my Sabbaths" (Exod 31:13; Lev 19:3, 30; 26:2, see Knohl 1995, 15 n. 15).

Observance of the Sabbath has a uniquely special place in Ezekiel's primary source, HS (see Knohl 1995, 17). For the Zadokites, Sabbath observance is Israel's perpetual covenantal obligation. They teach that the Sabbath is a sign of the holiness with

which the Lord sanctifies Israel (Exod 31:13 HS; cf. Ezek 20:12). Here, the holiness of *time,* just like that of *place* and *people,* is structured and *graded* (see Jenson 2009, 182). The entire land is a lattice of holiness for HS and for Ezekiel. Hallowing the Sabbath out in the land confirms that the temple's holiness reaches everywhere.

Against the claim of Kasher (1998, 206), HS elevates the Sabbath and places it on the same level as the annual festivals. Thus, HS prefaces Lev 23:1–3 to PT's proceeding description of the feasts. Ezekiel's book moves in the same direction. In fact, Ezek 23:38 speaks of the sanctity of the Sabbath and that of the sanctuary in the very same breath.

I am unclear why Kasher (1998, 206) thinks that PT in Lev 23:38 is close to Ezek 44:24 in differentiating between Sabbaths and appointed festivals. The verse in question is not PT, but from either HS or later editors (Knohl 1995, 56, 105; MacDonald 2015, 80). PT, in contrast to the Zadokites, does not elevate Sabbath observance as a unique link with God.

Verse 25 makes specific the oblique cautions in v. 20 about death's defiling impurity. The restrictions on priests engaging in mourning and funerary rites echo HS in Lev 21:1–3, 11. We saw in discussing Ezek 39:11–16 how Rashbam emphasized that corpse defilement exposes Israel to the highest possible level of uncleanness. Corpses are able to transmit impurity at several degrees of separation.

Verses 26–27 take the quarantine period required for laypeople after corpse defilement and double it for priests. Numbers 19:11–13 (HS) outlines a seven-day procedure of ritual purification, including application of water of purification on the third and seventh days. Ezekiel 44 stipulates an additional seven days and a purification offering at the temple after this week of cleansing before a priest can return to duty (Konkel 2001, 124).

Verses 28–31 form a new subsection dealing with the Aaronides' and Zadokites' provisions for living. Knohl (1995, 53) notes the unique relationship between Num 18:9, 12–14, 20–24 and Ezek 44:28–30a. Verse 28 draws on HS in Num 18:20, which gives the priests no landed inheritance in Israel but makes God their special allotment.

In contrast to all other Israelite groups, the priests of Ezekiel 40–48 are barred from possessing land. Even the Levites receive a "holding of land" (*ʾăḥūzzâ,* 45:5; the uppermost zone in fig. 5), but 44:28 specifies that no such *ʾăḥūzzâ* applies to priests. Instead, the priests' sole privilege, which actually endangered their lives (cf. Lev 10:6–11 HS), is access to the raised inner court (the terrace bounded by the perimeter marked *D* in fig. 2). Access to this holy area also entails rights to the offerings processed through the courtyard. For discussion, see Stevenson (1996, 87–89) and Renz (1999b, 244).

Do not underestimate the restrictions on the Zadokites. In advanced agrarian societies, a chief enticement of political power was its potential to multiply income from land. On the heels of power came increased wealth, brought forth from the soil. This is one of several pieces of evidence against a hypothesis of sectarian self-promotion in Ezekiel (e.g., Strine 2013, 274, 280). Stevenson (1996, 89) nicely discerns the utopian vision's careful balancing of power between the priests, the Levites, the ruling chieftain, and the lay tribes: "It is a carefully devised system which ensures that YHWH is the sole power holder."

Ezekiel 45:3–4 and 48:10 will clarify that although priests do not hold tribal patrimonies, they do move into living space within land set aside as holy (the middle

bands of land in fig. 5). Their houses will be in the same sacred territory/district as the temple sanctuary. (A buffer zone of 85 feet separates their residences from the temple zone; 45:2.) The older role of priests as a "social glue" interpenetrating the Israelite tribes has been abandoned. It is rendered unnecessary by the sacred miasma of God seeping out along the land's lattice of holiness. The miasma is the land's new social glue.

Ezekiel's priests do not farm or otherwise cultivate any of the sacred land set aside as their living space but use the area for houses and perhaps for grazing cattle. HS has a precedent for this, in that it grants the Levites houses and grazing land at their Levitical cities, where they are to live alongside the homes and arable fields of laypeople (Lev 25:32–34, Num 35:2–3, both HS; cf. Josh 21:1–2, 1 Kgs 2:26, Jer 32:6–15; Haran 1978, 116–17). Note that Jeremiah's hometown, Anathoth, is a Levitical city (Josh 21:18) where Jeremiah and his Levitical kin naturally have what Lev 25:34 calls their *ʾăḥūzzâ,* which consists of open pastureland around Levitical cities (Haran 1978, 120).

Verses 29–31 conclude the passage, stipulating that the choicest of the people's offerings supply the priests' livelihood (see HS at Num 18:8–19). Without lands to farm, they are dependent on these offerings. Beyond this, however, it is a huge privilege to take their meals as guests in God's house, sharing in God's own food.

On the offerings of loaves from each year's first ground flour, see Num 15:20–21 (HS). On the blessing that flows from these offerings, see HS at Num 6:22–27. The final verse, v. 31, is straight from HS at Lev 22:8 (cf. Lev 7:24). Priests must shun meat from carcasses found dead on roads or in fields, which would taint them with death. As MacDonald (2015, 111) aptly notes, given the food gifts just mentioned in vv. 29–30, no priest should ever need to eat such things, which are fully unfit for human consumption.

The Land's Central Strip (45:1–9)

45 [1]When you distribute the land by lot as [the tribes'] inheritance, you must set apart for the LORD a consecrated reserve/Terumah, a holy district within the land, 8 ⅓ miles wide and 6 ⅔ miles long. The entire area will be holy. [2]A square section within this land measuring 875 feet by 875 feet will be set aside for the temple complex, with an additional buffer of empty land 87 ½ feet wide around it. [3]Within the holy district, measure out an area 8 ⅓ miles wide and 3 ⅓ miles long, within which will be located the sanctuary complex, a most holy place. [4]This area will be a sacred portion of the land; it will be [living space] for the priests ministering at the sanctuary precinct, the ones drawing near to minister to the LORD [at the altar]. It will provide them a place for their houses as well as holy ground for the sanctuary precinct. [5][The other half of the holy Terumah, above the priestly area, also] 8 ⅓ miles wide and 3 ⅓ miles long, will be for the Levites ministering [at large] in the temple compound. [It will be] their holding of land with towns to live in.

[6]You will allot to the [land's central] city a holding of land 1 ⅔ miles long and 8 ⅓ miles wide adjacent to [and south of] the holy Terumah. It will be held in common by the whole House of Israel.

[7]The ruling chieftain will have space on each side of the holy Terumah and the holding of the city, adjacent to the holy reserve and the city's holding, on the west side extending west and on the east side extending east. His land's east-west width will correspond to that of the land's [tribal] territories. [8]This shall be his holding within Israel. My chieftains shall no longer oppress my people. Rather, [satisfied with this large holding,] they shall let the House of Israel have the land as [God allots it] to each tribe.

[9]Message from the Sovereign LORD: I have had it with you, chieftains of Israel! Get rid of violence and destruction and do justice and righteousness. Cease your evictions of my people—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

45:1. *By lot.* The Hebrew verb for apportioning the land here is literally the causative form of the verb "fall." The idiom references the casting of sacred lots in determining land distribution. The Hebrew idiom does not require the noun "lot," but I have supplied it (since English needs it). The idiom will reoccur in 47:22 and 48:29.

As . . . inheritance. The syntax here employs the *beth essentiæ* (*IBHS* 198), specifying how the land is received by the tribes (cf. GNT: "to give each tribe a share").

Terumah. The term for "consecrated reserve," *tĕrûmâ,* is most often associated with contributions made to the Lord of various types of movable property (see 45:13), literally portions "lifted" from the greater whole to form a consecrated gift, a ritual offering. (See Note *Consecrated contribution* on 44:30; older English translations spoke of "heave" offerings.) The combination expression "raise a raised offering" is a characteristic expression of HS and Ezekiel (it also occurs once in PT, in Exod 29:27). The NJPS of Ezek 45:1 speaks of "a gift sacred to the Lord"; the VOICE translation speaks of God's "sacred ground." In Ezekiel 45 and 48, the term *tĕrûmâ* essentially becomes a proper noun, Terumah, referring to the land's "holy district" (NRSV), its "sacred reserve" (REB). For its location, see figure 5.

Wide. The MT repeats the term *ʾōrek* both before and after the number, conflating two possible syntactic placements of the term. Note that *ʾōrek* does not mean "length" here (NRSV, NJPS, and most translations) but is an *east-west* dimension (see the term's use in 45:7) that modern readers will tend to describe as the area's "width." In 48:8, the GNT helpfully glosses the correlative dimension *rōḥab* as meaning "north to south."

6 ⅔ miles long. See figure 5, dimension C. I follow the LXX on the north-south length of the district being 20,000 cubits, that is, 6 ⅔ miles (also see 48:9). The figure of 10,000 cubits in the MT does not make sense. The length of the priestly area alone is already 10,000 cubits (45:3–4, 48:9) and to this must be added the additional 10,000 cubits of the Levitical area (45:5) to form the "holy Terumah" (see 48:20; see fig. 5, diagram A). According to 48:20, the holy Terumah together with the city's land directly below it, 5,000 cubits long (45:6), forms a square Terumah 25,000 cubits on each side (see fig. 5, diagram B). The NJPS and NET retain the MT's figure of 10,000 cubits in 45:1, but the term "Terumah" would then have three different referents in 45:1 and 48:20.

45:2. *Temple complex.* Ezekiel 42:14 and 44:27 had previously used the term *qōdeš* (holy place) in a narrower sense, applying it to the temple's inner courtyard. Now, 45:2 applies the term to the sanctuary compound as a whole (cf. Ps 60:6 [MT 60:8] NRSV, NJPS, CEB; Ps 68:24 [MT 68:25]). Such usage is known from HS texts, which can use *qōdeš* to signify the tabernacle and all its courts (Exod 40:9, Num 3:28, both HS). In vv. 3 and 4 the term for the temple compound will be *miqdāš,* as at Ezek 43:21 and 44:1, again using the broad sense of a term (in contrast, e.g., to 44:7). The dimensions given here for the temple compound correspond to those given for its outer wall in 42:15–20.

Buffer. The text here adopts a Hebrew term earlier used by HS to designate the pasturelands around certain towns given to the Levites for their perpetual use (Lev 25:34, Num 35:2–7). According to *HALOT,* the Hebrew term refers to the belt

of land and the city precincts situated outside the walls. Note that 87 ½ feet equals 50 cubits.

45:3. *Holy district.* The paraphrase clarifies the Hebrew phrase "measured area," that is, the holy Terumah (see fig. 5, diagram A), whose dimensions were supplied in 45:1. The area has upper and lower halves, presumably with the north half going to the Levites and the south half belonging to the priests and the temple (see fig. 5). The reconstruction is uncertain but appears likely, since it places the temple in the geometric middle of the square Terumah (which is 8 ⅓ miles long, north to south; see 48:8) as well as in the Zadokites' special ribbon of land (which 48:12 describes as bordering on the Levites' area). It correlates as well with 48:22, which speaks of the Levites' holding and the city's holding as the outer boundary tracks of the square Terumah. (Ezekiel 48:22 leaves unmentioned the priests' area, with the temple, which was enclosed between the two outer tracks.) See Joyce (2007a, 234), Stevenson (1996, 35, fig. 4; 47), Zimmerli (1983, 535, fig. 7); but contrast Rashi, Block (1998, 733, fig. 11), and Milgrom (2012, 252, fig. 20).

Sanctuary complex. As at Ezek 43:21 and 44:1, the term *miqdāš* in this context appears to cover the entire sacred precinct inside the outer walls of the temple complex.

Most holy place. Ezekiel 43:12 spoke of the entire enclosed area of the sanctuary precinct atop God's holy mountain as being "most holy," and this verse reflects that notion. The temple complex is of superlative holiness not in an absolute sense but in relation to its surroundings. It is the most holy area within the larger consecrated reserve/Terumah that surrounds it, which 45:1 has called a holy district. Of course, gradations of holiness still remain within the complex. As Radak notes (on 43:12), "Different points on the temple mount itself have varying degrees of holiness."

45:5. *Holding.* The term *ʾăḥuzzâ* is tribal diction of allotment and access to land from HS (e.g., Lev 14:34, 25:10; Strine 2013, 167). Allocation to Israel is conditional; God remains the land's true owner (187). Ezekiel 40–48 distinguishes *naḥălâ* and *ʾăḥuzzâ,* specifying that the latter need not entail a permanent patrimony (see Stevenson 1996, 84). When 46:16 speaks of receiving a holding "as an inheritance" (CEB; see Joüon, 458, sec. 133, c), it allows that holdings may also be received in other ways than as ancestral heritage. Here in 45:5, land comes as a divine grant. Ezekiel 44:28 used the term "holding" with the meaning "land grant," just as here. That verse (44:28) denied priests any such holding. (Against Milgrom [2012, 192], the priests receive neither *naḥălâ* nor *ʾăḥuzzâ.*) Since the Levites do not receive the priestly prebends of 44:28–31, they, unlike the priests, depend on the divine grant of arable land for their sustenance (Haran 1978, 127).

Towns. I follow the LXX, "for them as a holding, cities to live in," emending the Hebrew to read *ʿārîm lāšebet* (see Zimmerli 1983, 466; Cooke 1936, 496; Allen 1990, 246). The emended diction recalls the prescription of Levitical towns in Num 35:1–8 (HS). Could the forty-eight Levitical towns of Numbers 35 fit in Ezekiel's Levite strip, which is only 8 ⅓ by 3 ⅓ miles? Yes—forty-eight towns do fit, at least geometrically, if we assume forty-eight typical Israelite regional towns of about 12 acres each. Such regional towns might contain three hundred houses each. The towns would have to be quite evenly spaced if pasture land extends 1,500 feet in each direction from each town (see Num 35:4–5), but they would all still fit (as four rows of twelve towns). If pasture

land extends 3,000 feet, fewer than forty-eight towns could fit. The MT reads, "for them as a holding, twenty chambers" (see CEB, NJPS). Stevenson (1996, 85) speculates that the "chambers" could represent some type of dwelling places within the Levites' holding.

45:6. *[Central] city.* As part of the book's sustained critique of the preexilic Judean monarchy and of Jerusalemite royal theology (see, e.g., 11:3, 24:21), the temple vision deliberately does not use the name "Jerusalem" for the land's central city. It also moves the central city south, completely separating it from the temple complex (see fig. 5). The same diction, "the city," appears earlier at Ezek 40:1 and 43:3.

Holy Terumah. As in v. 1, here the strip of land containing the city is not understood as part of "the *holy* Terumah" (see fig. 5, diagram A; see also v. 7 and 48:10, 18, 21). Ezekiel 48:20, however, will speak of a more general, square Terumah, 8 ⅓ miles by 8 ⅓ miles, containing both a lower strip with the central city in it and an upper portion (the holy Terumah) with the priestly and Levitical strips in it (see fig. 5, diagram B).

Whole House of Israel. Assigning the city's territory to the entire people, and not to the crown or the priesthood, ennobles each lineage and person. All may lodge in their own designated zone within the square Terumah when making pilgrimage to the temple. The phrase "House of Israel" (Ezek 43:7, 10; 44:6, 22) is an HS idiom (Knohl 1995, 110).

45:7. *Ruling chieftain.* The *Nasi* (Hebrew: *nāśîʾ*), the ruling chieftain within Ezekiel's utopian vision, has appeared already in 44:3. He is the civic leader/governor, who takes the place of Israel's former hereditary royal monarch and who, in Zechariah's visions, leads the people alongside the chief priest of the temple (see, e.g., Zech 4:14).

Adjacent to. The chieftain's land lies bordering (on both sides) the holy Terumah and the city's holding in their combined north-south length (see NABR). It abuts the "central sacred square" and extends right and left, "eastward toward the Jordan and westward toward the Mediterranean" (MESSAGE). See figure 5, location D.

Land's [tribal] territories. Here I am including "land" from the start of v. 8 within v. 7 (with the LXX; cf. NJPS, NABR, NRSV, NJB).

45:8. *[Large holding].* The land of the chieftain was substantial, an area of about 370 square miles (237,000 acres), roughly the size of Cape Cod or Hong Kong.

45:9. *Had it with you.* The entire first portion of the verse, messenger formula plus expression of exasperation, occurs earlier in 44:6.

Comments

God's ordinances for the utopia, begun with the messenger formula in 44:6, now continue in 45:1–9. As before (44:6), God's frustration with past abuses motivates the rules (45:9). In fact, the expression "I have had it with you!" brackets Ezekiel's material outlining the main provisions for organizing and sustaining the priests, Levites, and chieftain. Ezekiel 44:28–31 described the provisions for the priests' sustenance. Now, 45:1–9 outlines the provisions for the Levites and the chieftain, who, unlike the priests, require farmland.

The material of 45:1–9 appears again in 48:8–22, and interpreters have wondered whether the passage is a "first draft" or doublet that is redundant in its present

position. The passage *is* likely excerpted from Ezekiel 48; however, it now plays its own unique role in the holistic, canonical shape of the utopian vision (Zimmerli 1983, 467). This emerges quickly upon close examination of the passage in its literary context.

In context, 45:1–9 continues to outline the support for those who minister that began in 44:28–31. Simultaneously, it introduces passages summarizing the offerings appropriate to the utopia (45:10–46:24). The people's first, foundational "offering" is a strip of the land, a "consecrated reserve/Terumah" (45:1). The term *tĕrûmâ* means "ritual offering" (NJPS: "a gift"; KJV: "an oblation"; BBE: "an offering to the Lord").

Later in Ezekiel 48, the Terumah appears within the land's territorial distribution, a context concerning "access to the Land by means of inheritance" (Stevenson 1996, 142). Here in Ezekiel 45, by contrast, the Terumah appears by itself as a foundational, "cosmic" inheritance of the entirety of Israel, which Israel "tithes" back to God. The Terumah is a core building block making the entire territory a *holy land,* worth apportioning to the tribes, whose populace it will sanctify and ennoble. As Duguid (1999, 517) aptly puts it, "Ezekiel wanted to reorient his hearers' focus onto what the original idea of a Promised Land was all about: a land in which God would dwell in their midst."

Ezekiel 45:1–9 describes a central strip of land running from the Mediterranean to the Jordan, which houses and supports society's ritual and civil leaders. A large square reserve, or district, 8 ⅓ miles by 8 ⅓ miles in area and divided, top to bottom, into three zones or belts, lies at the strip's center (see fig. 5, diagram B). The temple complex and living quarters for the Zadokites and Aaronides occupy the middle zone. The upper zone houses the Levites. The bottom, southern zone contains the land's central city and farmland supporting its workers. All land lying to the east and west of the central square district goes to the ruling chieftain and his descendants as a permanent allotment.

In Hebrew terms, the square reserve, that is, the "whole *tĕrûmâ,*" is 25,000 cubits square—a thousand *twenty-fives* (48:20). As we have seen, twenty-five is a highly significant number in the utopian vision. The central altar yard of the temple is four times twenty-five, that is, 100 cubits square. The temple compound as a whole is twenty times twenty-five, that is, 500 cubits square. Now we see that the compound has a buffer around it that is two times twenty-five cubits wide, 50 cubits. Further, the complex lies at the center of the square Terumah, which is one thousand times twenty-five cubits square. Ezekiel's utopia is a series of perfectly nested squares, their measures centering on a perfectly square number, twenty-five (5×5)—the sum of the squares of three and four ($25 = 3^2 + 4^2$). Three and four joined, we have seen, signals the nexus of heaven and earth.

Here again, Ezekiel's utopia presents us with a *transfigured* temple and holy land, which provides for humans a powerful and perpetual contact with heavenly reality. Once more, we see the holiness of the temple radiating out beyond compound walls, forming ever larger squares of sanctity. Words based on the root *qdš* (be holy) occur thirteen times in 45:1–9. Stevenson (1996, 34) aptly speaks of a "wonderfully concentric arrangement" of overlaid square matrices, with land, Terumah, and temple complex all centered on the square altar. Duguid (1999, 518) describes the "entirely temple-oriented geography," in which the temple's graded holiness is "extrapolated to the land itself."

The Zadokites' tiered, hierarchical network, their sacred latticework, penetrates and interconnects society in a manner transcending earlier norms. Unlike in preexilic times, the Levites are no longer spread throughout the land as a social "glue," cementing society together. Instead, fulsome life effusing out of a sacred center through an ideal latticework of holiness links center and periphery in dynamic interconnectivity.

Respect and empowerment do not easily flow down to the outer layers of society in a centralized monarchic state. Monarchic systems tend to contradict the idea of an entirely *hallowed land,* where the humanity and value of every sector, even those at the periphery, are upheld. They tend instead to divest the land of its sacral character, focusing on militarizing state capitals and fortifying royal cities. In Israel, monarchic power seems inevitably to have worked against the HS ideal of permanent land tenure for each family on its ancestral homestead (e.g., Lev 19:35; 25:10, 23–24, 42, all HS). This is a recurrent concern of Ezekiel's book. Thus, Ezek 11:15 stands up for kinship networks, using a rare Hebrew noun denoting prospective kin-redeemers of ancestral patrimonies. Such "kindred" folk must not suffer the alienation of their land (cf. Lev 25:25–28 HS).

Thus, for Ezekiel 40–48, God's ideal theocracy must push aside monarchy and all other political systems. From now on, Israel is to be the servant of God, not of an earthly ruler (see Ezek 20:33, 40; 45:8; cf. Lev 25:55 HS). In Ezekiel's utopia, there is no king, only a ruling chieftain. So too, the formerly royal city of Jerusalem will *not* regain its former status. No one will even call it "Jerusalem" anymore (at least, the book nowhere gives that name to the new city of Ezekiel's special central strip of territory; cf. 48:35). The Ezekiel school relocates "the city" south and away from the temple. It is not even part of the holy Terumah, but sits "adjacent to and south of" the holy zones of the priests and Levites (45:6). It now belongs to "the whole House of Israel," not to royal officials (cf. 48:31). All that lies within the bottom zone of the central square belongs to Israel as a tribal whole and is no part of a ruler's private domain (cf. 48:19). This vision contrasts with texts such as Isa 1:26; Jer 3:17; Zech 2:10–11, 8:3; and even Isa 60:14.

Exaltation of the chieftain is not the agenda of Ezekiel 40–48; reversing the wrongs of the past and securing the future is. Thus, the *Nasi* no longer possesses the temple and never again presides over a state cult (Albertz 2003, 434; Stevenson 1996, 112–14, 122). The chieftain also loses his entrenched bureaucracy (see 46:16–17), and, most definitively, in 45:8–9, he loses all power to evict Israelites from their ancestral farms (also see 46:18; cf. 22:27). Now, society's periphery becomes secure and strong (Levenson 1976, 114; Tuell 1992, 110). As in the HS strand (e.g., Lev 25:10, 23–24, 41), all lineages dwell in perpetuity on their own patrimonies. The entire land is valued as sacral.

Ezekiel 40–48 carefully integrates the *Nasi* into a new, tribally organized people. A prestate, tribal leader (Carvalho 1992, 179–80), he possesses no sacral kingship, no divine sonship. He acts as the people's representative (45:16, 46:10), not their exploiter, for, as Radak and Malbim note, the leader now has such ample property there is no need for exploitation. His generous allotment of land also allows him to pasture the animals and store the grain and oil supplied to him by the people for the temple offerings (45:16–17). Humble before God, such a chieftain is a sprig, a tender twig (Ezek 17:22). Or, as later followers of Ezekiel will put it, he is lowly, riding only on a donkey (Zech 9:9; cf. Ps 33:16–17, Zech 10:5b). Levenson (1976, 95; cf. 67–68, 88) rightly observes,

"The origins of that Davidid are not regal but humble; he is a . . . 'low tree' awaiting his exaltation."

A gradual weakening of tribal and lineage-based power and custom generally accompanies the growth of centralized monarchy in a society. Mark S. Smith (2001, 164), among other scholars, has helpfully documented a "diminished lineage system" in the Israelite society of Ezekiel's time. He rightly discerns a society "less embedded in traditional family patrimonies." Smith is mistaken, however, to associate the shift with the origins of biblical monotheism. He is correct that Ezekiel both stresses individual human accountability (see 18:4) and holds an individual deity, the Sovereign Lord, accountable for the cosmos (see, e.g., 17:24). The prophet never correlates the two themes as Smith does, however. Nor do these twin ideas even originate in Ezekiel's era.

God already holds individuals responsible for themselves in Ezekiel's source texts (see Num 16:22–24 HS). HS assumes that a God who owns "all lives" (Ezek 18:4), that is, "the spirits of all flesh" (Num 16:22 HS), will surely allow innocent individuals to separate themselves from the guilt of the community (Num 16:24 HS). Individual accountability is distinct from communal accountability. So too, HS knows God's own accountability. When Ezek 17:24 articulates this accountability, it can do so using the self-revelation formula of HS (cf. Exod 7:5, 10:2, 14:18). For both HS and Ezekiel, the formula "I am the Lord" is pregnant with assumptions about God's identity as sovereign.

It is Israelite society's premonarchic, tribal substratum that Ezekiel's book seeks to rehabilitate. The goal is to undo the oppressions of monarchy, including the claim of royal supremacy over the individual, the imposition of military service and forced labor, and the burdening of the populace with taxes and levies (cf. 21:12, 25; 22:6, 27; 34:2, 10). Ezekiel's book seeks to undo the monarchy's radical restructuring of land tenure. In tribal Israel, the guaranteed tenure of tribes, kin groups, and extended families on ancestral lands effectively established local justice and community. The security of kin-plus-land units fostered caring life on the land, rather than selfish exploitation.

Zadokites such as Ezekiel understood God's direct presence in Israel to uphold and empower every member of old Israel's tribes. HS claims that the people of Israel are God's servants, not a king's servants (Lev 25:23, 55; 26:12). It transfers to the populace standard monarchic prerogatives such as proclaiming a release from slavery and debts. Knohl (1995, 217) sees an example of HS backing away from monarchy in its converting the Mesopotamian concept of *andurarum* (release from debts), a royal prerogative, into the Hebrew concept of *dĕrôr* (Jubilee release), a function of the whole people. Thus Lev 25:10 (HS) addresses the ordinances about Jubilee release to the entire community, using second-person plural verbs: "You all [*ûqĕrāʾtem;* i.e., Israel as a whole] must proclaim a release in the land."

Weights and Measures for Offerings (45:10–17)

45 [10]You are hereby commanded to use honest scales, an accurate dry measure, and an accurate liquid measure. [11]The ephah [the dry measure] and the bath [the liquid measure] shall have the same fixed volume, the bath a tenth of a homer and the ephah a tenth of a homer. The homer shall be the standard unit for measuring volume. [12]The shekel [the standard measure of weight] shall equal 20 gerahs. Sixty shekels shall equal 1 mina.

[13]This is the sacred contribution that you must relinquish [so that the ruling chieftain may provide for temple worship]: a sixth of an ephah from each homer of wheat and each homer of barley; [14]the prescribed portion of olive oil, which, measured by the bath, is a tenth of a bath from each kor (a kor is 10 baths, that is, a homer, since 10 baths make up a homer); [15]and one sheep or goat from each flock of two hundred, from Israel's lush pastures. These will supply the grain offerings, entirely burned offerings, and communion offerings, to propitiate [God] for the people—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

[16]All the people of the land must join in offering this sacred contribution through the ruling chieftain. [17]It will be the chieftain's responsibility [using the offerings he has collected] to provide the entirely burned offerings, the grain offerings, and the liquid offerings at the sacred festivals, the new moon celebrations, the Sabbath days, and all other appointed assemblies of the House of Israel. It is he who will provide the purification offering, the grain offering, the entirely burned offering, and the communion offerings, to propitiate [God] on behalf of the House of Israel.

Notes

45:10. *Commanded.* Since God is directing Israel in this verse, the volitional force of the jussive appears to be that of direct command (see *IBHS* 568–69, sec. 34.3.b).

Accurate . . . measure. The provision for honest measures echoes Lev 19:35–36 (HS; see Lyons 2009, 165). The MT names specific standard units of measure: "an

honest ephah, and an honest bath." The ephah, a dry measure (for grain), was the size of a large basket, ½ to ⅔ of a bushel. The bath, a liquid measure (for oil, wine, and water), was about 6 gallons. Storage jars inscribed with the term "bath" have been unearthed at Tell Beit Mirsim and from an eighth-century BCE stratum at Lachish.

45:11. *Same fixed volume.* Liquid and dry substances may have identical volumes, but the measuring implements for each may differ, as may the names used for applicable units of measure. In modern-day America, a cup of flour has the same volume as a cup of water but requires a different type of measuring cup to avoid any patting or shaking that would compact the flour and throw off the recipe.

Homer. The homer was originally the load that one donkey could bear (cf. Akkadian *imēr,* "donkey load"). It was 5 to 7 bushels as a dry measure and about 58 gallons as a liquid measure.

45:12. *Shekel.* The shekel, the standard unit of weight, was a little less than ½ ounce. The monetary value would depend on whether the shekel was gold or silver.

Gerahs. A gerah weighed a little more than two-hundredths of an ounce.

Sixty shekels. The Hebrew has "20 shekels, 25 shekels, 15 shekels," a rather byzantine way of expressing "60" that is possibly the result of scribes including marginal numerical calculations and figures about value into the text of the MT. Zimmerli (1983, 477) supposes that units of 5 and 10 shekels were particularly frequent in transactions. The LXX reading would cohere with this idea: "Five shekels shall [really] be five, and ten shekels shall [really] be ten. Fifty shekels shall be one mina for you." Allen (1990, 240, 247 n. 12. a) adopts the LXX reading (see also RSV, BBE). On whether the mina was 50 shekels (LXX) or 60 shekels (MT), see the following note.

1 mina. In preexilic times the mina was 50 shekels (21 ounces, 1 ¼ pounds; see Exod 37:25–26 together with Deut 22:19, 29; for this value at Ugarit, see *UT* no. 1495); the LXX has this value (see Note *Sixty shekels* immediately preceding). However, the mina's value later increased to 60 shekels (as in the MT), in imitation of Babylonian practice. The ancient Babylonian mathematical system was based on sixty; our own modern division of minutes and hours into sixty parts traces back through Greece to Babylonia. Elephantine Papyrus *AP* 15 (fifth century BCE) indirectly attests to a 60-shekel mina in the Persian era, as do engraved weights found in Persepolis from the reign of King Darius of Persia (see Tuell 2009, 327–28). Note that the MT reads "shall be a mina *for you*" (see NRSV, CEB, NABR), perhaps emphasizing that all Israel ("you"), as God's exemplary people, must share a standard valuation of the mina (cf. the NJPS rendering).

45:13. *Relinquish.* The text returns to the language of *tĕrûmâ,* a portion "lifted" from the greater whole to form a consecrated gift (see Note *Consecrated contribution* on 44:30). The combination expression "raise a raised offering" is characteristic of HS and Ezekiel (it also occurs once in PT, in Exod 29:27).

Sixth of an ephah from each homer. The contribution described amounts to one-sixtieth of the wheat harvest and the barley harvest.

45:14. *Tenth of a bath from each kor.* The contribution described amounts to 1 percent of Israel's olive oil. The kor (NRSV: "cor") was a liquid and dry measure of volume equal to 10 baths or 1 homer (58 gallons). The verse is highly elliptical and cryptic. Its several glosses giving specifics and equivalents may be marginal notes that scribes

later incorporated into the biblical text. The GNT renders vv. 13–14 in the plainest English possible: "This is the basis on which you are to make your offerings: Wheat: 1/60th of your harvest; Barley: 1/60th of your harvest; Olive Oil: 1/100th of the yield of your trees (measure it by the bath: 10 baths / 1 homer = 1 kor)." The NABR understands the Hebrew to specify a much greater contribution of oil: 10 percent!

45:15. *Lush pastures.* The term *mašqeh* appears also to describe a well-watered land in Gen 13:10. Radak thus follows the Targum in speaking of the fattest of sheep, that is, plump sheep from lush pastures. The LXX, followed by the REB, reads "from all the clans of Israel." The Hebrew word is simply omitted by the NJPS.

Grain . . . entirely burned . . . communion offerings. This particular group of three offerings appears here, and again in v. 17, for the first time in Ezekiel's book. They represent common, representative sacrifices (cf. Amos 5:22). The combination of "entirely burned offerings and communion offerings" is singled out in Ezek 43:27 and 46:2. Ezekiel 42:13 and 44:29 (cf. 46:20) spoke of "the grain offering, the purification offering, and the reparation offering." The present passage will specifically include the purification offering in the second half of v. 17 but does not mention the reparation offering, considering it a personal offering of individuals, not part of the corporate offerings administered by the ruling chieftain.

Propitiate . . . for the people. The Hebrew reads *lĕkappēr ʿălêhem,* with the meaning "make expiation for them" (NJPS, cf. NJB). Modern translations tend to prefer the term "expiation" (deliverance from impurity and sin) over the term "propitiation" (averting divine wrath) in rendering *kāpar,* but the latter term better fits Zadokite perceptions of holiness as fatally numinous (see, e.g., Num 16:46 [MT 17:11] HS). Rudolf Otto deserves great credit for showing that divine "wrath" *is holiness.* It is the Holy in its guise as the "irrational" *tremendum*—something like stored-up electricity, discharging without thought on any encroacher. This central *irrational* dimension of the Holy is missed in claims like that of Stevenson (1996, 139): "The purpose of the Altar is not to appease an angry God." Ezekiel's diction of propitiation is from Lev 1:4, 14:21 (PT) and Num 28:22 (HS).

45:16. *The people of the land.* Note the irregular definite article on "the people," a noun determined by "the land," another noun with the definite article. For other instances of this type of abnormal syntax, see Joüon, 487, sec. 140 c. The phrase, which is also found in HS (Lev 20:2, 4), harkens back to old, tribal Israel, whose societal organization Ezekiel 40–48 wishes to emulate in part (as with the *Nasi* figure). The reference is to rural gentry. This is the first appearance of the phrase in the vision of the utopian temple, but it occurred in the Ezekiel apocalypse in 39:13 in a similar positive sense. Earlier in Ezekiel's book, the people of the land appear as those under God's judgment.

Through the ruling chieftain. The Hebrew is terse and cryptic, but the MESSAGE paraphrase appears to capture the sense deftly: "Everyone in the land must contribute to these . . . offerings that the prince in Israel will administer." This fits the interpretation of Eliezer of Beaugency that the chieftain provides his offerings from the sacred contribution donated by the people (see Milgrom 2012, 198).

45:17. *[Has collected].* In paraphrasing v. 17 the VOICE version elaborates: "Using the animals and produce he's collected, the prince will provide the . . . offerings . . . to cover the wrongs done by the people."

Comments

Some understand 45:10 to continue the rebuke of leaders found in v. 9. It is better to see a new section (45:10–17) beginning, turning to ordinances aimed at ensuring uniform measuring standards across Israel, not simply at curbing monarchic abuses. In HS, the Ezekiel school's primary source, the command for honest measures in Lev 19:35–36 addresses Israel at large. A new focus on temple offerings also begins here, shifting the topic from the previous passage. Fixed standards of measure spread the responsibility for offerings equitably and ensure that the offerings' full measure is presented at the temple.

The ordinances of 45:10–17, of course, apply to leaders and administrators as well as to the populace. In fact, it was the rulers, in the ancient Near East, who enforced standard measures in a society (see *ANET* 523–24). What is more, Ezekiel's chieftain *is* responsible for presenting God's required offerings. So too, until now the leadership responsibilities of the chieftain have not been specified, and it is time that they were. Apparently, representing the people and presenting their offerings is here a major duty. Thus, on several levels, there is a certain logic in the passage's placement after 45:7–9.

The passage divides into three sections: a definition of standard measures (vv. 10–12), an outline of required levies for temple sacrifices (vv. 12–15), and an appended elaboration describing the chieftain's role as the people's representative (vv. 16–17). The final section, which follows the divine utterance formula of v. 15, makes explicit the offering collection procedure and names the specific sacrifices involved and their main purpose.

Actually, v. 17 provides two lists of sacrifices. The first may be understood simply to flag representative sacrifices for feasts and Sabbaths, namely, the entirely burned offerings and the grain offerings, with mention also of the accompanying olive oil, the liquid offering (45:24, 46:5). The second list expands the first into a rather comprehensive catalog, driving home the chieftain's inclusive responsibility for *all* public offerings. Zimmerli (1983, 478) postulates an intention to "correct" the first list.

Ezekiel's chieftain takes up the typical royal role in the ancient Near East of providing sacrifices for temple festivals (vv. 16–17). Yet, Ezekiel 45 stresses that Israel's utopian *Nasi* does not do this as a royal patron but only as the people's *representative.* Against some interpretations (e.g., Duguid 1999, 518), v. 17 does not single out certain sacrifices as the *Nasi*'s personal responsibility. Rather, as noted, vv. 16–17 clarify and elaborate preceding material. As Eliezer of Beaugency rightly explains, the chieftain provides his offerings from the sacred contribution donated by the people. So too, Malbim stresses that the *Nasi* brings as sacrifices what comes to him from the people.

The text understands sacrifices to purge sin and address communal guilt. Zimmerli (1983, 479) is quite correct: "The expiatory significance of the sacrifice is emphatically expressed." Both v. 15 and v. 17 use the *piel* infinitive construct of *kāpar*—diction of propitiation that signifies people taking responsibility for their impurity and sin (Exod 32:30; Lev 16:30, 34), facing judgment (Deut 32:43, Jer 18:23), and respecting the "irrational" danger of the Holy (Num 16:46 [MT 17:11]). In Ezekiel 40–48, evil remains a dark, potent force. A literary utopia is *not* the eschaton, where evil and death are defeated by God, but an alternate world that exits alongside present reality and challenges it.

In v. 15, Ezekiel assumes the HS view that the communion sacrifice, the *šĕlāmîm,* atones. In the utopian temple, the blood of the *šĕlāmîm* offerings carries guilt to the altar, and their meat sends holiness out to the world (consult Gilders 2004, 146). Whereas in PT this sacrifice does not propitiate, in HS it does. Milgrom (2000, 1475) makes the case on the basis of Lev 17:10–11, where the declaration that blood on the altar propitiates occurs in a specific context prohibiting the ingestion of blood, a danger arising for laity only with *šĕlāmîm* offerings.

Notably, v. 17 is clear that purification offerings, which the chieftain also administers, propitiate just like the other blood sacrifices. This was already true in Leviticus (e.g., Lev 16:6, 11, 16). The purification blood grapples with the sins of the guilty offerers (see Lev 6:27b), whom it saves from judgment (e.g., Lev 4:14, 26, 35). Thus, the blood of these animals does not merely bathe the temple in the life force of blood (cf. Lev 17:14), cleansing the shrine of accumulated impurity. Rather, note how in Leviticus 4 the blood of the sacrifice comes "before the Lord" (Lev 4:15, 17, 18; see Gilders 2004, 136), directly engaging God, who renders forgiveness (Lev 4:20, 26, 35; see Gilders 2004, 137, 140). This contradicts Stevenson (1996, 90): "The function of the offering is purification rather than expiation. The purification offering does not purge the one who offers the sacrifice."

All full citizens must contribute to the offerings that the chieftain administers, supplying him animals and produce as levies in the amounts here defined. His two large tracts of land afford him generous capacity to graze the people's livestock and store their foodstuffs awaiting presentation at the temple (see fig. 5, location D). Not all temple offerings pass through him, but only those for public, appointed celebrations, including pilgrimage feasts, new moon festivals, and weekly Sabbaths. Personal, voluntary offerings (see Ezek 46:12) are independently brought to the temple by individuals.

The reparation offering (*ʾāšām*) is absent here, as it is a personal offering, not a corporate one that brings collective atonement. This is not always true in other texts, including those of Aaronides. Thus, in Isa 53:10–11 a unique reparation offering brings salvation to the collective whole, and in Ezra 10:19 a public reparation offering is central to Ezra's purification of the community. At least in these cases, the blanket conclusion of Milgrom (2012, 198)—"The *ʾāšām* is exclusively a private offering"—is simply inaccurate.

Also doubtful is the claim (Milgrom 2012, 198) that only accidental, inadvertent sin is possible in the utopia of Ezekiel 40–48. If so, one can hardly account for the remonstrative tone of 43:9, 44:6, 45:9, and 46:18. A literary utopia must wrestle with a fallen, deathly world if its insights are to apply to surrounding quotidian experience. Finally, there is no basis for Milgrom's stance that this passage eliminates the high priest. The passage is about chieftains, not priests, and says nothing about clerical organization.

Regulations for Major Festivals (45:18–25)

45 [18]Message from the Sovereign Lord: On the first day of [each] new year, [that is, in early spring,] you are to cleanse the sanctuary by sacrificing a bull of the herd without any defects. [19]The [head] priest shall take some of the blood of the purification offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple building, on the four corners of the ledge of the altar, and on the doorposts of the [east] gatehouse of the inner courtyard. [20]Repeat this ritual on the seventh day of the month for anyone sinning inadvertently or through ignorance. In this way you propitiate [God] on behalf of the temple.

[21]On the fourteenth day of the first month [of the year], you will observe the Passover, a feast of seven days. [During the festival] bread made without yeast shall be eaten. [22]On the first day of the festival, the ruling chieftain must offer for himself and for all the people of the land a bull for a purification offering. [23]And during the seven days of the festival—on each of the seven days—he is to offer seven bulls and seven rams, without any defects, as an entirely burned offering to the Lord. He is also to offer a male goat each day as a purification offering. [24]With each bull and each ram he is to provide a grain offering of 1 ephah [i.e., a large basket, half a bushel, in size], with a hin [i.e., a gallon] of olive oil for each ephah [of grain].

[25]For the Feast [of Booths], which begins on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, [the chieftain] shall make these same provisions through the seven days, the same purification offering, the same entirely burned offering, the same grain offering, and the same [gift of] olive oil.

Notes

45:18. *[Each] new year.* As indicated by the brackets, the word "each" is not in the Hebrew text. Some commentators (e.g., Rashi, Radak, Block 1998, 662–64) argue that this rite is a one-time inaugural sacrifice like the rite of 43:18–27. Whereas 43:18–27 described a one-time cleansing of the temple's altar, however, the present text appears later in the context of a discussion of rites performed annually. Further, here the priest

smears blood on the altar (45:19), something unnecessary if 43:18–27 and 45:18–25 represent linked decontaminations, first of the altar and then of the temple building. Why repurge a clean altar? An annual cleansing of new impurity and sin must be in mind.

[Early spring]. The first month of the Hebrew calendar of Ezekiel's time occurred in March or April. In the postexilic era, Judeans called it by the Babylonian name "Nisan" (Neh 2:1, Esth 3:7). It was called "Abib" in earlier times. (And in another early system, the new year began in the autumn; see Exod 34:22, Lev 25:9.) Like Ezek 45:21–24, HS (Lev 23:4–8) places Passover in the first month of each year.

You are to cleanse. Against several commentators (e.g., Block 1998, 663), nothing should be made of God's addressing Ezekiel directly in these instructions. This is a generic "you" (cf. Num 28:4 HS). The text does *not* imagine that the prophet will be involved in the annual rite (see Note *You* on 43:19; Note *You will provide* on 46:13; Milgrom 2012, 200). This utopia is *not* to be built and put in service in real time.

Bull of the herd. The expression "bull of the herd" (cf. NJPS, CEB, ESV), priestly idiom from Leviticus and Numbers, appeared earlier in Ezek 43:19, 23. The reference is to a domesticated bull (Milgrom 1991, 232).

45:19. *[Head] priest.* The expression "the priest" with definite article (*hakkōhēn*) occurs only here and in 44:30 in Ezekiel's vision of the utopian temple. I argue below that the figure in mind is Ezekiel's equivalent of a head priest or "chief priest." In Leviticus, only the head priest—called simply "the priest" (*hakkōhēn*)—performs the purification offering on behalf of Israel (Lev 4:13–23).

Purification offering. We have already seen a purification offering with some of the blood used in cleansing rites in 43:18–27.

Doorposts of the temple building. The MT singular is likely a collective noun, referring to the two posts of the building's main hall. The LXX, Peshitta, and Vulgate all have the plural. Radak says that "first the blood shall be sprinkled on one doorpost and then on the other." The singular noun is used again in 46:2. The doorposts of the temple's main hall appeared earlier in 41:21, where their four-sided geometry was emphasized. They are positioned on the large jambs, 10 ½ feet deep, between the porch and the main hall (see 41:1). Hanging on the doorposts are folding accordion doors, carved with cherubim and palm trees (41:23–25). (See fig. 7, inset, location C.)

Ledge of the altar. As described in 43:14, the altar actually has two ledges (an upper one and a lower one; see fig. 8, middle, locations H and I). Ezekiel 43:17, however, uses the term "the ledge" to designate the upper of the two, 24 ½ feet square. This is likely the reference here as well. Dabbing blood that high would require some sort of cultic implement. At 10 ½ feet off the ground, the ledge is taller than a modern basketball hoop.

Doorposts of the [east] gatehouse. This is the first mention of the gatehouse's doorpost (*mĕzûzâ*), although the location is highly significant (see also 46:2). For the possible position in mind, see Note *Doorposts* on 46:2. The versions all support the singular noun *ša'ar* (gatehouse) of the MT. Although the singular could represent the collective "gatehouses" of the inner courtyard (NABR, NJB, GNT), more likely Milgrom (2012, 198 n. 233) is correct to think the east gate tower is alone in mind. If so, the ritual blood is dabbed at key sites along the temple's central axis, its "sacred spine" along which the divine Presence has passed, hallowing it (43:4–5).

45:20. *Repeat this ritual.* I have paraphrased the Hebrew, "And thus you shall do . . . ," for greater immediate intelligibility. On Gese's break with Wellhausen in rejecting the LXX's reading (an understanding of a biannual purgation), accepting instead the MT's picture (rites repeated on the first and seventh days), see O'Hare (2010, 120–21).

Seventh day of the month. The Hebrew expression "in the month" at first seems unusual, but Konkel (2001, 161) ably accounts for it (cf. Num 10:11 HS). The odd syntax led the LXX to read, "in the seventh month, on the first of the month." Wagenaar (2005, 105) has revived the reading, but Konkel (161) shows how the LXX's text easily derives from a misunderstanding of the MT's Hebrew. Further, it would strain the syntax of vv. 18–20 to make the addressing of inadvertent sin in v. 20 apply not only to the rites of that verse but also to rites in vv. 18–19 taking place six months earlier.

You propitiate [God]. Verse 18 spoke of "cleansing" (*ḥiṭṭē'*) the sanctuary, but the text here uses the language of propitiation (*kipper*), which conveys the need to reckon with the tensive, "irrational" power of the Holy to discharge numinous energy against anything proximate that is contaminated with impurity and sin. Already Leviticus speaks of the purification offering as propitiating God on behalf of the shrine (e.g., Lev 16:16–17, 20; consult Milgrom 2012, 199 n. 237).

45:21. *Passover.* Originally a family festival, officiated over by the head of each household, Passover became a centralized celebration at the central temple in the book of Deuteronomy and under kings Hezekiah and Josiah. Ezekiel maintains Passover as a national, centrally observed occasion and goes further, fully merging it with the originally separate Pilgrimage Festival of Unleavened Bread (see Exod 12:17).

Shall be eaten. The diction specifying seven days when unleavened bread shall be eaten derives from Num 28:17 (HS).

45:22. *First day.* The Hebrew literally reads, "On that day."

For himself. As Mackie (2015, 200) notes, the LXX *Vorlage* has a plus here, reading "for himself and for his household," an expansion likely based on the repeated occurrence of the phrase in Lev 16:6, 11, 17, where a parallel purgation offering is described.

People of the land. See Note *The people of the land* on 45:16.

45:23. *Male goat.* The phrase *śĕ'îr 'izzîm,* literally "a buck of goats," appeared in 43:22. It comes from the priestly sacrificial language of the Pentateuch.

45:24. *[Large basket].* The ephah measure is defined above; see Note *Accurate . . . measure* on 45:10.

Hin. The hin was a liquid measure, about 4 quarts (NLT: "a gallon").

45:25. *Feast [of Booths].* Although the Hebrew speaks only of "the feast," ancient readers would have been aware that the great festival of Booths or Tabernacles was in mind. By not naming the feast, the text maintains its focus on how temple purification rites should occur every six months. The authors' primary concern is clearly not with the individual contours of Israel's traditional festivals.

Same provisions . . . seven days. Very similar Hebrew diction occurs in Num 28:24 (HS), suggesting that Ezekiel lifted the diction directly from his primary source material.

The same . . . the same. The repeated use of the preposition *kĕ* mirroring the initial *kā'ĕlleh* and meaning "the same" is striking. BDB (453, sec. 1. C) discusses the use of the preposition *kĕ* to express mode or limitation, specifically "conformity" (as in

Josh 6:15). The sacrifices at the midyear feast *must directly conform* to those at the New Year's feast, mirroring them. Modern English translations do not bring out the stress on mirroring, but the LXX does so well: "You shall do *in like manner, just like* the sin offerings and *just like* the whole burnt offerings and *just like* the gift offering [*manaa*] and *just like* the oil."

Comments

A prophetic messenger formula (45:18) signals the start of a new passage. The mention of sacrifices and festivals in 45:17 has now led to the task of outlining the central feasts of the ritual year. There are three surprises: A New Year's ceremony has been created; the Feast of Weeks has disappeared; and Israel's other two major feasts, Passover and the Feast of Booths, are now semiannual purification festivals (held in the first and seventh months). The strong deviation of this section from the festival ordinances of the Mosaic Torah profoundly engaged traditional Jewish interpreters. It is in commenting on this passage that Rashi recounts the story of Hananiah, son of Hezekiah, who burned three hundred barrels of oil in his attic resolving the contradictions between Ezekiel and the Torah. Because of his efforts (now lost, Rashi says, because of "our iniquities"), Ezekiel's book remains in the canon.

As in Ezekiel's source, HS, the Feast of Weeks is ignored (see Lev 23:21 HS). The Passover and Feast of Booths are retained—again, as in HS (cf. the standard calendar, Numbers 28). Their original concern to memorialize the exodus and the wilderness journey, however, has greatly faded. The Ezekiel school has made HS's sanctifying matrix, centered in the shrine, the central preoccupation of Israel. The festivals now form two calendric foci maintaining the holiness of the sacred center. They form twin anchors of the new liturgical year. Striking syntax emphasizes how the paired festivals mirror each other and entail substantially increased sacrificing (see Note *The same . . . the same* on 45:25). (For the increase in sacrificing during Passover, consult Num 28:16–25.) These daring departures redress Israel's catastrophic failure hosting God's Presence. A new temple cleansing before the Passover feast intensifies the new priority of ritual purging.

What are we to make of the unprecedented New Year's ceremony in Ezekiel 45? For a Zadokite theology prioritizing purity and holiness, it is eminently sensible to ritually cleanse the sanctuary at the start of each new ceremonial year. Evil and death are still present in Ezekiel's utopia, as we have seen, so periodically expunging presumptuous and inadvertent sin and impurity is requisite. Further, the Ezekiel school would have found a start-of-the-year cleansing rite logical, given their knowledge, as recent exiles, of the Babylonian New Year's festival, which included significant rites of temple cleansing.

Ezekiel and his school had no problem affirming, sometimes co-opting, "archetypal" paradigms of foreign cultures (see Ezek 28:14, 27:5, 29:3, 31:3, 43:17). The altar's form as a ziggurat is a prime example (see Note *Another 7 feet up* on 43:15). So too is the spin put on Babylon's *pît bâbi* ceremony (see Comments on 44:1–3).

As Carvalho (1992, 186) writes: "Many elements [in Ezekiel 40–48] reflect Mesopotamian practice. . . . The impetus to increase the size of the temple courts, the drive towards symmetry, the installation of the river, the description of the main altar,

and the motif of the departing and returning deity are all better understood in light of Babylonian practice." We increase our understanding of Ezekiel's utopian vision by observing both what is embraced by the text and what is respun, repurposed, or targeted for upending.

Here in 45:18–25, the school finds theological traction in the synchronicity of the Israelite and Babylonian New Year. Israel already celebrated the start of each lunar month (45:17, 46:1), and a new year did begin at Passover time in Israel (Lev 23:4–8 HS). A ceremony beginning the year fits all this; it does not intrude as a foreign rite.

During Babylonia's new year *akitu* festival, priests ceremonially cleansed Marduk's temple complex, the Esagila, and his son Nabu's guest suite, the Ezida. Cleansing the Esagila included prayers, aspersion, percussion, fire, and incense. Purging the Ezida included most of the above plus smearing cedar oil on the chamber door and wiping (Akkadian: *kapāru*) the interior with the decapitated carcass of a ram.

The Akkadian verb form *kuppuru* (D stem) describing the blood ritual is clearly cognate with the Hebrew D/*piel* verb form *kipper,* which is used both in Ezek 45:20 and, with reference to the Day of Atonement, in Lev 16:33 (HS; see Gane 2005, 365). While correctly noting contrasts, Calaway (2013, 166 n. 86) nicely summarizes remarkable resemblances between the Babylonian *kuppuru* rite and the Israelite Yom Kippur.

Critically appropriating the purification element of the Babylonian festival, Ezekiel 45 transforms it to accord with the Jerusalem temple heritage, incorporating especially elements of Yom Kippur. Thus, 45:18 emphasizes the sacrifice of a "bull of the herd" (*par-ben-bāqār*), the same animal that purifies the sanctuary on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:3). This is a traditionally special animal. Milgrom (2012, 209) describes the bull as the most expensive and most effective purification offering.

Also echoing the rituals of Yom Kippur, Ezek 45:19 has the head priest (see Note *[Head] priest* on 45:19) spatter sacrificial blood at key temple loci (Lev 16:14). Unlike earlier practice, these points are now completely outside the adytum, where no human being any longer enters. They do, however, form key points along the "sacred spine," the holy east-west axis of the utopian temple (the line proceeding through locations F, G, and H in fig. 2).

As we turn to the feasts of Passover and Booths in vv. 21–25, the number seven, and multiples of seven, jump out. Thus v. 23 repeatedly speaks of sevens, stressing that seven bulls and rams must be offered each and every day of the feast. "Seven" is surely meant to have symbolic resonance here. It carries its traditional intimations of completeness, fulfillment, and divine holism. Milgrom (2012, 199 n. 241) reflects: "The prevalence of the number seven in the rituals of the ancient Near East may be due to its being the first non-regular number indivisible by two, three, and five. That it could not be broken down gave the number seven the attribute of perfection, power, and permanence."

Seven, as noted earlier, is of great import for the Zadokites (i.e., Num 8:2 HS; Ezek 9:2; 39:9, 12; 43:26; Zech 3:9; 4:2, 10). Thus, Ezekiel 25–32 speaks against seven nations, and the final section against Egypt (29:1–32:32) contains seven oracles. The Zadokites particularly embrace each week's seventh day, the Sabbath, giving it a special role in God's ongoing sanctification of God's people (Exod 31:13 HS; Ezek 20:12, 44:24). Also, seven times seven years—seven Sabbaths of years—is forty-nine years, the cycle marking Jubilee release (Lev 25:8–55 HS, Ezek 46:17).

Most significant in the present context is that all the sevens bind the newly paired feasts of vv. 21–25 with the theme of purgation/Kippur introduced in vv. 18–20. In HS the Day of Atonement, with its forceful focus on temple cleansing, is intensively seven-oriented. It is a Sabbath of critical sabbatical solemnity, a *šabbat šabbātôn* (Lev 16:31, 23:32, both HS). Calaway (2013, 163) describes Yom Kippur as "the ritual event that coordinates the Sabbath and the sanctuary, holy time and holy space, at their greatest intensity." The ritual calendar's new paired festival foci now embrace this same holy joining of Sabbath and sanctuary, thus driving home the Zadokites' two main emphases.

Verses 21–24 outline the instructions for celebrating Passover. Absorption with the many purification and wholly burned offerings leaves the theology of Passover unarticulated. Certainly, as we have seen, the feast is now reoriented on temple cleansing and on coordinating Sabbath and sanctuary as twin pillars in Israel's sanctification. But surely celebrating Passover also evokes ancient memories of lambs' blood smeared on the doorways of Israelite dwellings. Such memories reverberate strongly with the ritual smearing and wiping of the Babylonian *kuppuru* ceremonies cleansing the Ezida of Nabu.

Despite commonplace scholarly assertions that Passover was originally purely apotropaic and thus unrelated to expiation, the theme of atonement was actually always present. The paschal blood rites always functioned to drive home God's stark claim on the lives of all earth's firstborn creatures, which God wants recommitted, *resacrificed,* to God (see Exod 11:5; 12:12, 29; 13:2, 11–16). This "firstborn phenomenon" pertains particularly to the paschal rites of God's own "firstborn" people, Israel (Exod 4:22–26).

As paschal blood covers the dwellings of God's firstborn people, atonement occurs as Israel "sacrifices" itself in utter submission to God's sovereign claim on everyone's life breath (Exod 13:16). From a canonical perspective, one must compare the covenant-forming rite of circumcision, which spares Israel's life (Exod 4:24–26). The Zadokites, of course, champion the stark divine claim on all terrestrial life. On Passover night, according to HS, God determines, "I will strike down every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both human beings and animals; on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord." Ezekiel's book echoes the conviction. "All lives are mine," God declares in Ezek 18:4. Peoples' life blood is God's belonging (Ezek 3:18, 33:6).

The renewed emphasis in Ezekiel 45 on the atoning and purifying power of Passover is part of a significant trajectory. In early Judaism, Passover is incorporated into the temple's sacrificial system of atonement. Jesus assumes this, according to the Gospels, and links his own paschal blood with the forgiveness of sins (Matt 26:28). Josephus writes that the original paschal lambs were sacrificed in a rite of self-cleansing and purification (*Ant.* 2.312). Midrash Rabbah depicts God making atonement for Israel and offering forgiveness through the paschal blood (Midrash Rabbah Exodus 15:12).

Verse 25 rounds off 45:18–25 by establishing the Feast of Booths as the second of the liturgical year's mirroring foci. The festival occurs in the fall, in the seventh month, right at ancient Israel's alternate, autumnal "new year" (cf. Judaism's Rosh Hashanah at the start of Tishri). Again, the copious atoning sacrifices of v. 25 signal a continuing stress on maintaining the temple's purity and sanctity. Yom Kippur, associated with the Feast of Booths (Lev 23:27, 34), is here absorbed into it. One might have expected the feast to begin on the fourteenth of the month (7×2), but the fifteenth

day was traditional (Lev 23:34). Once more, the text leaves unspoken any additional Zadokite understandings of the theological meaning of the festival. Later, however, the Zadokite successors of Ezekiel showcased the Feast of Booths in Zech 14:16–19.

Zechariah 14 plays up the Feast of Booths' traditional association with God's royal enthronement over creation. Twice, the aim of the nations' pilgrimage to Israel's temple is declared to be to "worship the King, the LORD of hosts" (Zech 14:16, 17; cf. Ezek 1:26, 43:7). The feast is also linked to earth's fertility (Zech 14:17; cf. Ezek 47:1–12).

Extrapolating from this evidence, one can easily imagine the autumn feast of Ezek 45:25 as an annual celebration of the enthroned Presence. The *kĕbôd ʾĕlōhê yiśrāʾēl* has traveled up the sacred spine to hallow the temple and reoccupy "my throne" (43:7). J. J. M. Roberts (2005, 114), in full conversation with recent detractors of the idea, maintains that the traditional Feast of Booths dramatized this very theme, including "a ritual re-enactment of Yahweh's accession to the throne symbolized by a procession of the ark into the sanctuary, and the placing of the ark . . . in the inner sanctum."

Before we leave Ezek 45:18–25, we should consider the place of "the priest" of v. 19. In Leviticus, language of "the priest" (*hakkōhēn*) signifies the chief, anointed priest, who alone performs purification offerings to propitiate God on behalf of Israel (Lev 4:16–35, 16:32–33). Here in Ezek 45:19, the striking occurrence of *hakkōhēn* (also see 44:30) signals that this head priest again rises from among his brother priests to perform focal propitiatory rites for the people. Here is Ezekiel's "missing" chief priest (contrast Milgrom [2012, 58, 168], who finds no place for such a figure in Ezekiel 40–48).

Just as there is no king in Ezekiel 40–48, merely a chieftain, so there is no "high priest" per se but a chief cleric. The preference in the utopian vision for nonroyal, lineage-based structures means we should not expect to find such a figure, set apart ontologically, qualitatively superior to other priests. As Duguid (1994, 64) states, any head cleric "is more likely to appear as *primus inter pares,* the head of the priestly family." Zadok appears in such a manner, as the lineage head, the *nāgîd,* of the Aaronides in 1 Chr 27:16–17 (cf. 1 Chr 9:11, 2 Chr 31:13).

Interestingly, in Ezek 28:13 a figure wearing what looks like the high priest's breastplate (cf. Exod 28:17–20) does appear, arrayed in royal splendor (see Wilson 1987). Tellingly, he is soon cast out from God's presence because of pride (Ezek 28:17). The Zadokites are determined that no similar temptation to hubris occurs in Ezekiel's utopia.

In Ezekiel 45, "the priest" works in concert with the *Nasi* (Hebrew: *nāśîʾ*), the Davidic chieftain, who provides the offerings for the cleansing rituals. A similar paired, cooperative relationship appears in the book of Zechariah. Zechariah envisions Yehud's ideal polity as entailing leadership cooperation between the Davidide and the chief priest. Zechariah 4 epitomizes the diarchic standard with its symbolic paired olive trees (4:3, 11–14). Zechariah 6 drives the standard home with its two crowns of authority (*ʿăṭārôt,* v. 11; NABR, NJPS), the second reserved for the coming messianic Davidide (the "Branch") and kept as a portent (v. 14). Dispelling any doubt that Zechariah 6 maintains a diarchy, where the *Nasi* and chief priest work cooperatively, v. 13 proclaims peace between *two* figures (*šĕnêhem;* NET, NABR, NJPS, NRSV), a civil, governing head and a ritual, priestly head.

Offerings at the East Inner Gatehouse (46:1–15)

46 [1]Message from the Sovereign Lord: The east gatehouse to the inner courtyard shall be shut six working days [each week], but it is to be opened both on the Sabbath and at the new moon celebration. [2]The ruling chieftain, coming from the outer courtyard, will approach the gatehouse's porch/narthex and stand beside the doorposts of the gate. Then, [while he watches,] the priests shall offer up all his various sacrifices. Then he shall bow low in worship there at the doorstep of the gatehouse and go back out; but the gate should not be shut until evening. [3]The land's people shall [also] bow low in worship at the entrance of that gatehouse before the Lord on the Sabbaths and on the new moon celebrations.

[4]The entirely burned offering that the chieftain will bring to the Lord on the Sabbath day shall consist of six lambs without defects and a ram without defects. [5]With each ram he is to bring a grain offering 1 ephah [a large basketful] in size, and with the lambs the grain offering is as much as he is able to give. For each ephah of grain he is to bring a hin [a gallon] of olive oil. [6]At the new moon celebration, [he will bring] a bull of the herd without defect as well as six lambs and a ram, all without defects. [7]With the bull and the ram he will provide a grain offering of 1 ephah each. With the lambs [the grain offering is] as much as he is able to give. For each ephah [of grain he is to bring] a hin of olive oil. [8]The chieftain must approach [the doorstep of the inner, east gatehouse] by heading [up the stairs] toward the porch, and he must leave by the same way he came up.

[9]When the land's people come before the Lord at the appointed holidays, those who enter to worship via the north gatehouse shall exit via the south gatehouse; and those who enter via the south gatehouse shall exit via the north gatehouse. You may not go out by the same way you entered, but must leave by the gatehouse straight ahead of you. [10]The chieftain is to be there with [the land's people], entering and exiting along with them. [11]So [to sum up the grain and oil offerings], at [all] the pilgrimage festivals and appointed holidays the grain offering with a bull or a ram shall be an ephah in size.

With the lambs [the grain offering is] as much as [the chieftain] is able to give. For each ephah [of grain, he is to bring] a hin of olive oil.

[12]When the ruling chieftain wants to make [a personal, voluntary offering] to the Lord, [either] a voluntary entirely burned offering or a voluntary communion offering, the east gatehouse [to the inner courtyard] will be opened for him. He will provide his entirely burned offering and his communion offering in the same way that he does on the Sabbath day and then depart—only [in this case] the gatehouse is to be closed immediately upon his exit.

[13]Every day [at the temple], you will provide a year-old lamb without defect as an entirely burned offering to the Lord. You will provide it morning by morning. [14]Also, you will provide a grain offering with it morning by morning, a sixth of an ephah in size, along with a third of a hin of olive oil to moisten the finely milled flour. The presenting of this grain offering to the Lord is a continuing and permanent ordinance. [15]The lamb, the grain offering, and the olive oil are to be presented morning by morning, burned entirely as a daily ritual.

Notes

46:1. *Inner courtyard.* The Hebrew specifies that the inner east gatehouse is in mind (see fig. 2, location Z). This fits the context, in which the chieftain will be presenting offerings that will be sacrificed in the altar yard, immediately through the inner gate tower. The outer east gatehouse (see fig. 2, location A), of course, was now permanently closed and could not be used to bring sacrifices into the temple complex (44:1–2). Note that both of these gate towers, inner and outer, lie on the temple's central, sacred spine, and are associated with special duties and privileges of the ruling chieftain (see 44:3).

New moon. Monthly new moon festivals, already mentioned in 45:17, were part of Israel's standard liturgical calendar (see Num 28:11–15). Such celebrations were ancient (cf. Amos 8:5) and natural (given Israel's lunar calendar). They continued past Ezekiel's time (Isa 66:23, Ezra 3:5, Neh 10:33). The Zadokites, however, may have had qualms about interlunium rites (see Hos 5:7 and the discussion below in the Comments).

46:2. *Porch/narthex.* The porch in mind was described back in 40:34, which stated the "entry porch faced into the outer courtyard. There were decorative palm trees on its pilasters . . . and its stairway had eight steps."

Doorposts. The term *mĕzûzâ* (doorpost) occurs six times in Ezekiel 40–48, while the term *ʾayil* (jamb, jamb-post, pilaster; plural: *ʾêlîm*) occurs more frequently (nineteen times). The former noun, *mĕzûzâ,* appears to be the more specific of the two terms (cf. 1 Kgs 6:31, "The doorjamb [*ʾayil*] was a five-sided doorpost [*mĕzûzâ*]," or "The doorpost [*mĕzûzâ*], set against the jamb [*ʾayil*], was five-sided"). The doorposts were often sunk into holes/sockets in the doorstep/doorsill. As opposed to the term *ʾayil,* whose semantic range encompasses doorposts, doorjambs, pilasters, and broad piers or wall space (see Ezek 40:9, 16, 24; Note *Piers* on 40:10), the term *mĕzûzâ* marks a specific, symbolically rich ritual position (see Exod 12:7 HS). The doorposts of the gatehouse were referenced once before in Ezek 45:19, where they form one of the focal points for daubing blood during the New Year's purgation ceremony. The Hebrew noun was collective there as well (see Note *Doorposts of the [east] gatehouse* on 45:19).

The doorpost position here lies in one of two possible locations: (1) right at the front entrance to the porch/narthex (see fig. 2, location G) or (2) farther in, at the jamb-posts between the porch and the inner threshold area (40:7) and guard alcoves (see fig. 3, location B). If the second alternative is correct, the "doorstep" (*miptān*) of 46:2 may possibly be identified with, or somehow related to, the "threshold" (*sap*) of 40:7. Whether it is at location 1 or 2, it is at this key liminal position that vital ceremonial functions of the chief priest (45:19) and the ruling chieftain (46:2) directly intersect.

Offer up. Now offerings noted earlier in 45:17 are offered up to God.

Various sacrifices. The text refers literally to "his entirely burned offering and his communion offerings," but most likely this is shorthand for all the sacrifices that he brings, including those that vv. 4–5 and 12 will soon describe (see the diction at 43:27, 45:15). One could also take the Hebrew more literally, however, as indicating that before offering the people's sacrifices (see vv. 4–5), the chieftain offers his own freewill offerings (v. 12). The translation would then be: "both his [freewill] entirely burned offering and his communion offerings." But, against Milgrom (2012, 211), it seems unlikely that personal offerings of this sort would precede collective, national offerings. Milgrom asserts that the sacrifices of 46:2 do not expiate for the public, but 45:17 may imply that they do.

Bow low in worship. The text uses the diction of prostration, the *hishtaphel* of *ḥwh,* "bow low in worship," as it does also in v. 3 and v. 9.

Doorstep. The term *miptān* in its meaning "doorstep" (NRSV: "threshold") occurs only here in Ezekiel's utopian temple vision. (The word *miptān* probably does not signify "doorstep" in 47:1.) A synonym, *sap,* appears in 43:8. (In 40:6–7, *sap* refers to a chamber within the gate towers, not a doorstep, but it *is* conceivable that the doorposts are located here; see Note *Doorposts* on 46:2.) Traditionally, the *miptān* was a stone slab forming a doorway's bottom and extending outward. It was usually one large block filling the frame's width, sitting slightly higher than the interior floor level. The doorstep might have sockets near the jambs, into which doorposts were sunk. Significantly, the English term "liminal" comes from the Latin word for "threshold," *līmen.* The threshold zone here in 46:1–15 is a significant liminal/boundary marker, where the chieftain, as Israel's representative, approaches the priests as they officiate in their sacral altar service.

46:5. *Able to give.* With this priestly idiom, Ezekiel is loosely echoing texts such as Lev 14:22, 30, and 31. The allusion is more exact in v. 7 below. Some English translations understand the text to merely give the chieftain discretion here (NRSV, NIV, CEB, NJB) or to allow that a mere handful of grain will do (MESSAGE). As reflected in the NJPS, NABR, REB, and ESV, however, the language hints that the chieftain may have limited resources at his disposable. Offering six lambs each week could require a daunting amount of grain, which, in turn, could require the chieftain to supplement Israel's offerings with burdensome contributions of his own. The idea of a chieftain with limited resources accords with the general model of tempered civil rule in Ezekiel 40–48. Ezekiel's *Nasi* does not "reign" as king but is first among the co-vassals of God. Thus, for example, v. 10 directs the chieftain to move through the temple courts mingled with everyone else, "entering and exiting at the same time and in the same way as the commoners" (VOICE).

46:8. *Toward the porch.* The chieftain has entered the outside courtyard through its north or south gateways and then ascended the inner east gateway's eight steps,

where he presents the people's offerings. Verse 8 ends the subsection, prohibiting the chieftain from penetrating any farther into the restricted priestly zone beyond the gatehouse threshold. Verse 9 begins a new topic concerning the public's movement through the outer gates and has no close, antithetical connection with v. 8 as Rashi and the NLT assume. Note that if the NIV and NLT are correct that the chieftain travels *through* the inner gateway's porch, then option 2 listed above for the doorposts' location must be the correct one (see Note *Doorposts* on 46:2). In fact, Zimmerli (1983, 490) thinks the *Nasi* penetrates past the first threshold (*sap;* see 40:7) to the second threshold at the exit to the inner court (see 40:6; see fig. 3, location T [recall that in the inner gate towers, T leads to the altar yard]). The Hebrew idiom, however, may mean "path toward" rather than "passage through" (see, e.g., Gen 3:24, 16:7; Exod 13:17).

46:9. *Appointed holidays.* The term *môʿēd* is the more general of the text's two words for feasts and holidays, *ḥag* and *môʿēd* (v. 11). Radak notes that *môʿēd* may be used for appointed times that are not temple festivals. In v. 11 it refers to micro-holidays celebrated each week and month. The Zadokites considered even the Sabbath a holiday (*môʿēd*), as shown by HS's prefacing of Lev 23:1–3 to PT's succeeding description of feasts. Here, however, it encompasses both micro-holidays and pilgrimage festivals (*ḥaggîm*), since the need to choreograph crowds applies mainly to the great pilgrimage feasts. (Attendance was not required of all Israel at Sabbaths and new moons.)

Worship. The text continues to use the diction of prostration, the *hishtaphel* of *ḥwh* ("bow low in worship"), employed above at vv. 2 and 3. The language is later picked up in Zech 14:16–17.

You . . . must leave. The *qere* corrects the *ketiv* to conform the verb to the third-person masculine singular used elsewhere in the verse. I have cast the entire last part of the verse in the second person to achieve an inclusive-language rendering that is not awkward. I understand this "you" as the generic "you" found in 45:18 (see Note *You are to cleanse* on 45:18) and in Num 28:4, 8. Israel is *not* imagined to implement the utopia.

46:11. *So [to sum up].* Verse 11 repeats ordinances for grain and oil offerings that have already been specified in 45:21–25 and 46:4–7, summarizing these rules as they apply uniformly to all Israel's holidays. The reference to the bull does not apply to Sabbaths. The reference to lambs does not apply to the feasts of Passover and Booths. Verse 11, though redundant, creates a pattern of *choreography* plus *sacrifice specification* in 46:9–11 that mirrors the pattern in 46:1–8. As ever, the utopia is ordered and symmetrical.

Pilgrimage festivals and appointed holidays. The phraseology aims to be inclusive of all Israel's holidays. Sabbath and new moon are considered *môʿădîm.*

[The chieftain]. Some English translations think of the individual worshiper as the subject making these offerings (NABR, GNT), but the NLT is correct to specify the chieftain as the primary figure in mind here. He holds responsibility for bringing forward all mandatory sacrifices on all feasts, new moons, and Sabbaths (Ezek 45:17).

46:12. *[Personal, voluntary offering].* Ezekiel combines two types of offerings under the rubric of the voluntary/freewill, noncalendrical offering: (1) voluntary entirely burned offerings and (2) voluntary communion offerings. Either type could be a spontaneous expression of joy and thanksgiving or be a gift fulfilling a vow to God (Lev 22:18, 21 HS). The chieftain could offer these gifts at any time. The populace would not normally be present in great numbers on weekdays wanting to participate

(by bowing at the gateway), so the gate can be closed immediately upon his exit. As Rashi states, "On weekdays . . . everyone is occupied with work. . . . It is not customary for them to come."

46:13. *Every day.* The expression *layyôm,* meaning "for every day," "daily," occurs thirteen times in the Hebrew Bible, including in Ezek 4:10, 43:25, 45:23, and 46:13. It refers specifically to the daily offerings at the temple in Exod 29:38 (HS) and Num 28:3, from where Ezekiel 46 takes the language. Ezekiel 46 differs from Mosaic Torah, however, in omitting the second, evening daily sacrifice. For discussion, see the Comments.

You will provide. A few Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, and the Vulgate read the verb as third-person singular (referring to the ruling chieftain) at both occurrences in the verse (see NRSV, NJB). However, the temple priests, not the chieftain, superintend the daily sacrifice. The "you" of the MT is the generic "you" found in 45:18 (see Note *You are to cleanse* on 45:18) and in Num 28:4, 8 (also concerning the daily offering). Ezekiel 46 is drawing on this part of Numbers (see Note *A daily ritual* on 46:15; also see Exod 29:38, 39, 41, all HS). As in 45:18, the use of the second person marks a new (sub)section.

Morning by morning. The text repeats the expression three times (46:13, 14, 15), emphasizing the daily continuity of the offering. The diction occurs in both HS (see Exod 16:21, 36:3) and PT (Exod 30:7, Lev 6:5).

46:14. *Also, you.* Two medieval Hebrew manuscripts, the LXX, the Syriac, and the Vulgate read the verb as third-person singular, but see Note *You will provide* on 46:13.

Permanent ordinance. I read the singular, "ordinance," along with the Targum and several Hebrew manuscripts. The end of v. 14 lifts its language from Lev 24:3 (HS), perhaps even indicating the presence of quotation through chiasm, that is, through reversing the word order of *tāmîd* and *ḥuqqat ʿôlām* (Seidel's law, on which, see Lyons 2009, 88). The word order of Ezekiel 46, "continuing and permanent," is unique and somewhat awkward, signaling Ezekielian dependence on the earlier text of Leviticus. Notice also the rhetorical artistry of v. 14 and v. 15, which both end with similar sounding Hebrew wordings: *ʿôlām tāmîd* (v. 14) and *ʿôlat tāmîd* (v. 15).

46:15. *A daily ritual.* The end of v. 15 echoes Num 28:6 (HS), as made apparent by the phrase *ʿôlat tāmîd*, which is particularly characteristic of HS in Exod 29:42 and Numbers 28–29. As MacDonald (2015, 14) notes, where a phrase makes a single appearance in one text but has a wider distribution in another, the latter is likely the source of the former.

Comments

The text describes the actual procedure to be used for making offerings and worshiping in the utopian temple. It summarizes the rituals for worship on Sabbaths and new moon celebrations (vv. 1–8); at pilgrimage festivals and all appointed holidays (vv. 9–11), when the ruling chieftain makes a personal voluntary offering (v. 12); and at the temple's daily offering ceremony (vv. 13–15). As ever, the rules address the fictive Israel of a utopian reality. The Israel of the here and now is *not* understood actually to implement the utopia, a point I have repeatedly argued. This does not preclude the

possibility that these ordinances may have had their background in early Persian-era planning for reconstructed temple worship in Yehud.

The east gatehouse to the inner court of the temple is normally closed six days a week but is opened for the Sabbath and new moon. The ruling chieftain approaches the gatehouse from the outer temple courtyard and stands right at the doorposts. There, viewing the gatehouse interior and altar yard, he watches the priests sacrifice the entirely burned offering and the communion offering that he has furnished. He does not arrogate any priestly functions to himself in the manner of some preexilic monarchs, but he does exercise privileged leadership functions right on the temple's sacred east-west spine, an axis already associated in 44:3 with other special *Nasi* privileges. As noted earlier, civil leadership on the east half of the spine and clerical leadership on its west half complement and balance one another.

As Ezek 45:17 has specified, it is the chieftain's responsibility to provide the burned offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings at all the sacred festivals, the new moon feasts, and the Sabbaths. Taxes levied on the populace provide for these offerings (45:13–16), which the *Nasi* may need to supplement out of his own means. As his offerings are made, the chieftain is to prostrate himself and worship God. Behind him in the temple's outer courtyard the people also prostrate themselves and worship God.

With its rare language of threshold (*miptān*), Ezekiel 46 situates the ruling chieftain at a "thin space" between the indwelling Presence of God and quotidian life outside the temple. At this liminal position key ceremonial functions of the chief priest (45:19) and the ruling chieftain (46:2) directly intersect. Here, Israel's civic and ritual life meet, as the *Nasi* brings forth offerings as the people's representative. After observing the sacrifices, the chieftain must exit the gatehouse back into the outer courtyard. He must not enter the temple's inner courtyard but must retrace his steps. The text drives the point home in v. 8, stating directly that he must go out by the same way he went in.

The doorstep (NRSV: "threshold") upon which the chieftain stands is a particularly significant liminal zone. Such a zone, which guarded entrances to special precincts, constitutes numinous and dangerous space. A threshold's quality of eerie otherness was marked in the ancient world by ceremonial deposits below the stone, such as divine images and burials. In some cultures, to stand on thresholds was generally both impious and dangerous (see 1 Sam 5:5). Even today, a groom often carries a bride over their new home's threshold, although he may not understand the roots of the custom. Zephaniah 1:9 presents a fascinating image of miscreants jumping over the temple's doorstep as unwelcome guests. Although the priests do not shut the gateway until evening so that all pilgrims have a chance to look into the passageway at the sacrificial rites, the chieftain must not loiter at the gate. He bows in worship, then moves back and departs.

Neither do the people as a whole dawdle during the temple celebrations, but judiciously keep moving, respecting their proximity to the holy Presence. They enter through one outer gateway and go out through the opposite one, moving straight ahead while in the outer courtyard. The directive to enter and exit expeditiously is less about crowd control (though see Ezek 36:37–38, Zech 2:4) than about reverent caution in a sacral precinct so tangibly close to God's indwelling Presence. Worshipers form two lines, moving in opposite directions past the central (eastern) inner gate tower. Once one has bowed low in worship, one heads straight for an exit.

Although the crowds move through the temple complex without loitering, commentators are incorrect to assert that they receive little view of activities at the altar (Zimmerli 1983, 490; Duguid 1999, 549; Milgrom 2012, 212). With the inner courtyard having no wall blocking their view, most people can easily peer up and see the priests' activities, especially activities on the altar hearth, which is 17 ½ feet above the priestly terrace. Ezekiel's utopia aims not to cloister and exalt the Zadokites and Aaronides, but to carefully share the holiness and sanctifying power of God with all Israelites, whom 46:3 specifically places "before the LORD."

As the crowds move north and south across the temple complex, they form a transverse axis cutting across the temple's east-west sacred spine. The *sacred* (east-west) axis and the *profane* (north-south) axis intersect at the inner east-gate threshold. At this *crux,* Israel bows "before the LORD" (46:3). The sacred axis represents God's incarnate Presence. The profane axis represents real human experience, including economic, kinship, and sexual involvements. The impact of the intersection at the gate threshold reverberates along both axes. Deity humbly confronts space-time, finitude, and chaos. Human involvements bow to God's sovereignty and actualize their sacred potential.

Ezekiel 46:4–5 mandates a sizeable increase in Israel's Sabbath offerings (see Num 28:9). It adds a ram, an extra four lambs, and an extra four-fifths of an ephah of grain. Rather than "contradicting" Mosaic Torah, Ezekiel 46 aims at *intensification.* The Sabbath, as we saw in 45:18–25, has a central place in the Zadokites' understanding of God's program to sanctify and ennoble Israel (Exod 31:13 HS; Ezek 20:12, 44:24).

Another way to elevate the Sabbath is to downplay the holiday often paired with it, the new moon festival. Thus, Ezekiel 46 speaks of the new moon celebration only after treating the Sabbath day. The text thereby departs from the traditional order, "new moon . . . Sabbath" (2 Kgs 4:23; Isa 1:13, 66:23; Hos 2:11 [MT 2:13]; Amos 8:5). So too, Ezekiel 46 reduces the new moon's status by decreasing its sacrifices (see Num 28: 11–15).

Beyond its effort to elevate the Sabbath, Ezekiel 46 may also downgrade the new moon festival in reaction to popular associations of the monthly interlunium period with death's infernal realm (see Hos 5:7). We saw the Zadokites' antipathy toward all things infernal and funerary in the attack on *pagru* rites and fixtures in Ezek 43:7–9. In preexilic Israel, new moon sacrifices were the occasion for some kin groups to reunite with relatives, both living and living-dead. First Samuel 20:6 speaks of a new moon "sacrifice of the *entire* kin group" (see van der Toorn 1996, 212). The exiles' exposure to the Babylonian *bubbulum,* the new moon "day of the dead," may have lent currency to such rites. From ancient times, the *bubbulum* was a time of contact with death's nether mire. As the moon vanished into death's abyss, Nergal, god of the underworld, led the living-dead back up to earth (Del Olmo Lete 2005, 48; van der Toorn 1996, 211–18).

A final mystery revolves around the reconfiguration in Ezekiel 46 of the temple's daily offerings. Why does the text halve the proceedings, omitting each day's evening sacrifice (see Exod 29:39; Num 28:4; 1 Kgs 18:29, 36)? The move is quite unexpected, in that it appears to contradict the utopia's general pattern of heightening reverence through increasing sacrificial offerings. Some interpreters suppose an evening sacrifice is assumed by the text, but the repeated phrase "morning by morning" (46:13, 14, 15) speaks against the idea.

The solution appears to lie in an anxiety to get the inner gate closed, to shut it well before evening (contrast 46:2). Maximizing the gate's "down time" limits Israel's exposure to the danger of holiness (cf. 44:19). It also attests that the sacred spine can never serve as an exit ramp for the *kābôd.* With inner and outer east gates shut tight, there is a sure, double witness to the permanent indwelling of the Presence. The Ezekielian concern with symmetry may also be at play. Morning sacrifices celebrate the day's start, fitting the idea that utopian Israel's prime points of celebration should be new *beginnings:* the new year (45:18), new moon (45:17; 46:1, 3), and now, each new morning (46:13–15).

The final verse of the section, Ezek 46:15, which summarizes the regular (*tāmîd*) sacrifice, appears to reuse language from HS at Num 28:6. That verse reads, "It is a regular burnt offering, ordained at Mount Sinai for a pleasing odor, an offering by fire to the Lord." Interestingly, just as Ezek 46:15 sounds like an editorial expansion, rounding off the treatment in Ezekiel 46 of the daily offering, so also Num 28:6 appears to be a Zadokite (HS) expansion of an earlier (PT) passage.

Just as Ezek 46:15 echoes Num 28:6, the preceding v. 14 uses specific diction from Lev 24:3 (HS). The careful echoes and repetitions in Ezek 46:13–15 approach a poetic style and emphasize the *daily* sacrifice at the temple as highly significant. A similar Zadokite emphatic style occurs in Lev 24:3–4, which emphasizes keeping the menorah lamps burning through every single night. In both the HS and Ezekiel texts, the regular (*tāmîd*) rite appears to be the core of the sacrificial system. (Later, Dan 8:11 will also emphasize it.) Why might the Zadokites stress the *tāmîd* in both HS and Ezekiel?

The final, climactic position of the section in Ezekiel 46 on the daily (*tāmîd*) sacrifices (vv. 13–15) probably emphasizes a recurring theme of Ezekiel 40–48: the importance of Israel continually communing with the Presence dwelling in its midst. The *tāmîd* offerings reflect foods that most families could afford: lamb meat, grain, and olive oil. The implication, then, is that this is a meal for *each* Israelite, who, the reader may infer, should ideally enjoy a sort of daily "table fellowship" with the Presence.

The conclusion to the HS section on the daily sacrifice in Exod 29:38–46 connects the continual offering, the *tāmîd,* specifically with God's meeting with Israel at God's shrine made holy by God's indwelling. The *tāmîd* is offered "before YHWH," who meets "you" (plural) (v. 42), that is, who meets "with the Israelites" (v. 43). God "dwells" among the Israelites as "their God" (v. 45), who brought them out from Egypt to "dwell among them" as "their God" (v. 46). The highly repetitious language of interrelationship leaves no doubt that the authors understand this offering to support Israel's tangible interconnection with God. Such language, as Gilders (2004, 136) observes of a different set of texts, means that the offerers of a sacrifice "engage in a relational enactment."

The Chieftain and the Land (46:16–18)

46 [16]Message from the Sovereign Lord: If the ruling chieftain presents a gift to any of his sons from his hereditary land, the gift passes to those sons. It becomes their holding of hereditary land. [17]But if the chieftain presents a gift from his hereditary land to one of his servants, it belongs to him, [that is, the servant, only temporarily,] until the [Jubilee] year of restoration. Then it reverts to the chieftain. It is [the chieftain's] hereditary land and is for his sons alone [that is, it stays in the family]. [18]The ruling chieftain must not confiscate any of the people's hereditary land, oppressively evicting them from off their permanent holdings. [Rather,] he shall endow his sons with an inherited patrimony from out of his own holdings, so that he does not run my people off their land, each from his rightful holding.

Notes

46:16. *Presents a gift.* Normally, hereditary land passed to heirs upon the death of the father according to standard patrilineal principles. The father, however, could apportion the distribution of inheritance before his death (see 2 Chr 21:1–3) and in some instances would share some of his holdings with children while still alive, keeping only what he needed (Job 42:13–15, Luke 15:11–12). Interestingly, Ben Sira opposes such premortem distributions (Sir 33:20–24). For discussion, see Adams (2014, 75–76 n. 95).

From his . . . land. The Hebrew text has no preposition, but the LXX reads "from," and v. 17 corroborates this understanding.

46:17. *To one of his servants.* For the classic scholarly treatment of royal land grants, see Weinfeld (1970). As noted by Tuell (2009, 322), such grants were a standard royal prerogative in the ancient Near East. Ezekiel 46 represents a revolutionary change.

Year of restoration. The reference is to the cyclical fiftieth-year Jubilee (Lev 25:8–15 HS; consult Rashi; Radak; Seder ʿOlam Rabbah; Bergsma 2007, 185), which aims to check predatory land seizure and unending debt slavery. The Targum supplies the term "Jubilee" here. At Jubilee, HS stipulates, all enslaved Israelites return to their ancestral

land. Ezekiel 46 here stresses Lev 25:28, where HS instructs that all family land that has been sold reverts at the Jubilee to the original family line as its genuine holding. Tenure on the heritage is restored, preserving a basic building block of Israel's tribal structure, the lineage-plus-patrimony unit. For discussion, see Adams (2014, 104, 106–8). We do not know how regularly (if ever) the utopian ideal of Jubilee was practiced. That Jubilee ideally occurs on a fifty-year cycle (25 × 2), however, correlates with the key symbolic significance of twenty-five for Ezekiel 40–48 (see the COMMENTS on 40:1–27).

It reverts. The verbal form is *šābat,* where *šābâ* is expected (see Rashi, Radak). This is a case of the reappearance of the old feminine *-at* ending (as in Arabic, Ethiopic, and Aramaic; see *GKC* 198, sec. 72o, 120, sec. 44f; and Joüon, 121, sec. 42f).

46:18. *Hereditary land . . . permanent holdings.* As Strine (2013, 167) notes, Ezekiel and HS share this terminology. Outside of Ps 2:8 and Num 32:32 (PT), the two nouns occur together only in Num 27:7; 35:2, 8, all HS, and Ezek 44:28; 46:16, 18.

My people. The phrase, which signals God's personal, anthropomorphic attachment to Israel's family, occurs four times in Ezekiel 40–48. Three of those instances (45:8, 9, and here) explicitly focus on God's people's tenured holding of parcels of God's land. (For God's personal attachment to the land, see Lev 25:23, a key source of our text.) Thematically related is the expression "people of the land" in 45:16, 22 and 46:3, 9. This language reinforces the return to premonarchic, tribal systems in the utopian vision.

Comments

A new section of ordinances for the ideal utopia now begins, introduced by the prophetic messenger formula (just as in 44:6, 45:18, and 46:1). Tuell (2009, 322) understands this passage to conclude the "Law of the Temple" (43:7b–27; 44:3–46:18), which he sees as a Persian-era addition to Ezekiel 40–48. Ezekiel's supernatural guide, last seen at 44:1, 4, returns immediately after the present passage (see 46:19). The description of the roles and support of the utopia's leaders is ending, as guide and prophet prepare to visit new areas.

The ordinances of Ezek 46:16–18 both limit the chieftain's use of his large estates and prevent him from expanding them. Lying on both sides of the square Terumah ("consecrated reserve," see fig. 5, location D) and consisting of roughly 370 square miles, the land of the chieftain was substantial. He directly controlled acreage of roughly the same area as modern Hong Kong or Cape Cod. With such generous landholdings, essentially equivalent to the land of an entire Israelite tribe within the new utopia, comes great responsibility, along with powerful temptations.

A corrupt chieftain could repurpose his landholdings, leveraging them as inducements and rewards for influential courtiers willing to pledge allegiance and supply political and military support. He and his nobles could also use powers of credit, judicial influence, and right of eviction to grab up others' farmlands. A *Nasi* might grab ever more land to give to his cronies (Duguid 1999, 520). Ultimately, such misuse of land could splinter Ezekiel's tribal utopia. It could rend apart the holiness lattice binding the people and create opposed classes, an elite and a down-and-out (see Amos 4:1).

Endowing the *Nasi* with the raw power of crown land would compromise the hierarchical system of holiness, community, and empowerment of Ezekiel 40–48.

Tiered systems, such as Ezekiel's, are vulnerable to competing nuclei of power, which tend to destabilize them. Extending its reach like a cancer, a competing nucleus can collapse the holy matrix's web of interconnectivity supporting community (Cook and Carvalho 2004).

The ruler of Tyre in Ezekiel 28 is a prime instance of violent unchecked crown power in the Zadokites' view. In the mythic tale, a cherubic king arrogates God's position, establishing a competing nucleus or center. Sitting in "the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas" (28:2, 6, 9), he pursues a violent reign of acquisitiveness (28:4–5). Unsatisfied with Eden's natural bounty (28:13–14), he perverts paradise through *trade* (28:5, 16, 18), which is here synonymous with extortion, the ruin of freeholders, and the decay of community. Thus, God declares, "In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence . . . so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God" (28:16).

Just such a rending of Israel's social fabric due to unchecked crown power occurred in preexilic times (see Ezek 34:4–6, 8, 21; Bergsma 2007, 184). Monarchic systems eroded the HS ideal of a *hallowed land.* They degraded the land's sacredness by divesting freeholders of ancestral lands and by elevating royal fortifications. Monarchic power, vested in crown land, perverted the greater good of an entirely holy land, by dissolving the tenure of lineages on their homesteads (e.g., Lev 19:35; 25:10, 23–24, 41, all HS). Because the kings evicted and scattered families, God scattered Israel among the nations.

Ezekiel's utopia seeks to undo and reverse the preexilic monarchy's rending apart of the communal solidarity of the HS covenant. For the Zadokites behind HS, Israel's traditional kinship bonds and practice of local land tenure formed crucial material supports of covenantal ethics. Such traditions protected and nurtured bonds of mutuality that joined Israelites together as interdependent vassals. No wonder Ezek 46:16–18 prioritizes the agrarian, lineage-based ethic of a bygone, tribal era. No wonder Ezekiel's *Nasi* loses all power to evict Israelites from their ancestral farms (45:8–9, 46:18; cf. 22:27). In this utopia, society's periphery becomes secure and strong. Relying on the HS strand (e.g., Lev 25:10, 23–24, 41), the text pursues a goal of all family lines dwelling in perpetuity on their own patrimonies, of the entire land being forever valued as sacral.

To ensure that the benefits of the utopia apply to each family line, 46:17 evokes the HS ideal of the Jubilee year. (On the logical necessity of Leviticus 25 being prior to Ezekiel 46, which draws on it, see the arguments of Bergsma 2007, 186–87.) Jubilee (*yôbēl*), most scholars recognize, has its origin in old, tribal Israel, where a chief societal aim was to buttress the security of each individual lineage and kin group. Thus, each family line is guaranteed its patrimony (Lev 25:13, 28 HS). After a survey of scholarship, Bergsma concludes that "the laws of Lev 25 have their origin in early tribal Israel" (75).

In Mesopotamia, in contrast with HS, proclaiming a release from debts (*andurarum*) was not an assertion of local, tribal authority, but a royal prerogative and political tool. Lowery (2000, 38) describes *andurarum* decrees as "ancient equivalents of tax cuts and pork-barrel spending, intended to curry favor and boost the political power of the new king." By insisting that Jubilee release (*dĕrôr,* a cognate of Akkadian *andurarum*) be a regularly recurring event reestablishing lineages and kin groups,

the Zadokites turned the *andurarum* on its head (consult Bergsma 2007, 26, 186). In Lev 25:10 (HS), they "democratize" the year of release, assigning its proclamation to the entire community. In Ezekiel 46 they even use the *dĕrôr* as a strong Israelite communal check on crown power. Here, the rule limits the chieftain's ability to form an elite cadre of cronies.

The passage, 46:16–18, concerning the chieftain and his land has a logical place in the utopian vision. Together with 45:8–9 it forms a set of literary "bookends" around a set of materials outlining the role of the *Nasi* in the utopia. The bookends insist that acquisitiveness and violence never pervert the ruling chieftain's key social role. By returning to the theme of God's allotment of Israel's land, the passage also forms a segue into the treatment of the land's boundaries and divisions in Ezekiel 47–48.

Sacrificial Kitchens (46:19–24)

46 [19]Then [the guide] brought me through the entrance flanking the [north inner] gatehouse to the priests' holy chambers that faced north. And look, there was a place back behind them to the west. [20]He said to me, "This is the place where the priests are to cook [the meat of the] reparation offerings and purification offerings, where they will bake the grain offerings. [They will do it all here] to avoid carrying the sacrifices through the outer courtyard and endangering the people by communicating holiness to them."

[21]Then he brought me out into the outer courtyard and led me across to the court's four corners. Look! In every corner of the [outer] courtyard there was a small enclosure. [22][To be more specific,] in the four corners of the [outer] courtyard were four enclosures constructed to handle smoke, each 70 feet long and 52 ½ feet wide. The four were of the [exact] same size. [23]Each of the four [enclosures] had a ledge [of building stones] running all along [its interior walls], with places for cooking fires built underneath the ledges all around. [24]Then he said to me, "These are the kitchens where the [Levitical] ministers of the temple compound cook the people's well-being sacrifices."

Notes

46:19. *[The guide].* The Hebrew has left the subject unidentified, reading simply "he," but this is the preternatural guide first encountered in 40:3. As of 44:4, the guide has left Ezekiel standing before the temple building, receiving temple ordinances from God.

Flanking the [north inner] gatehouse. The guide now leads Ezekiel out of the altar yard and along the west side of the north inner gate tower. They move across the small courtyard space on the inner terrace behind the room for washing sacrifices (40:38) and then through the entrance into the north sacristy complex. See Note *Eastern entrance at its foot* on 42:9 and the Comments below.

Holy chambers. The same phrase was used to refer to the sacristy rooms earlier in 42:13 and 44:19. As Ezekiel moves into sight of the sacristies, he notices, apparently for the first time, the kitchens back behind them to the west (see fig. 2, location AA).

A place. The text reveals little about the setup of the priestly kitchens, even leaving unspoken the existence of the mirroring kitchen area behind the south sacristies. We can extrapolate their general position and size from what is already clear from the vision about the temple complex's overall layout. If we assume that these priestly kitchens share some features with the public ones described in vv. 21–24, additional details may be surmised.

46:20. *Reparation . . . purification . . . grain offerings.* On the nature of these "most holy sacrifices," see Notes *Entirely burned offering* on 40:38, *Most holy sacrifices* on 42:13, and *Grain . . . purification . . . reparation offering* on 42:13. In a clear instance of Seidel's law, 46:20 has inverted the order of the triad of sacrifices found in 42:13. This marks a purposeful reference to the prior treatment, orienting the reader by setting the priestly kitchens within a sacrificial choreography established earlier in the vision.

Endangering the people. I have offered an expansive rendering (cf. NLT), since the Hebrew speaks simply of "transferring holiness" to the people (as at 44:19). A literal translation, conveying the simple sense, would mislead the modern reader. A transfer of *positive holiness,* facilitating the imitation of God, would be a desideratum (e.g., Lev 20:8 HS; Ezek 20:12, 37:28), but 46:20 concerns a transfer of *negative holiness,* which is potentially calamitous. Negative holiness separates the sacred and the profane (Lev 10:10 HS; Ezek 22:26, 44:23), and its transfer to the outer courtyard risks removing laypeople from ordinary life (see NJPS, NJB), possibly inflicting injury or death (cf. the MESSAGE translation; Lev 27:28–29, Jer 12:3, 1 Cor 11:29). Any degradation of the temple's tiered levels of holiness, in fact, endangers not only individual offenders but also all of Israel.

46:21. *Small enclosure.* Kitchens for cooking the people's well-being sacrifices lay on the perimeter of the temple complex (see fig. 2, locations BB). The assumptions of figure 2 fit the view of Rabbi Altschuler (*Meṣudat David*) that the kitchens' longer dimension (see v. 22) runs from east to west. The repetitive Hebrew syntax here signals how the kitchens are distributed among the compound's four corners (consult *IBHS* 115–16, sec. 7.2.3). The repeated use of the term *ḥāṣēr* (courtyard) evokes an image of each kitchen as a little walled courtyard.

46:22. *To handle smoke.* The term *qĕṭūrôt* is a difficult *hapax legomenon* of disputed meaning. Rather than emending the Hebrew, on the basis of the LXX and Syriac, to read *qĕṭannôt* (NRSV: "small courts"; cf. ESV, NJB), I retain the MT as the more difficult reading (*lectio difficilior*). I understand the noun to be cognate with the Hebrew root for "smoke" (*qāṭar;* the CEB reads "constructed to handle smoke"), a reading that is supported by the Mishnah (m. Mid. 2:5b), which thinks of smoke rising from unroofed precincts (the NJPS reads "unroofed enclosures"). Rabbi Altschuler (*Meṣudat David*) similarly sees *qĕṭūrôt* to come from *qāṭar,* "smoke." Another alternative is to read with the Targum, "fenced-in" enclosure (see NABR, NIV, BBE).

70 feet long and 52 ½ feet wide. In cubits, this is 40 by 30, so that we have the symbolic numbers three and four again. The utopian temple has three outer gates, three inner gates, four Levitical kitchens, and a four-horned altar. Three and four add up to the holy number seven, and they stand behind twenty-five, since the latter is the sum of their squares ($25 = 3^2 + 4^2$). Twenty-five, we have seen, is Ezekiel's focal number. The "Lower Walkway" of the courtyard was 77 feet wide (measuring from outer wall inward), so there was plenty of space around the corner kitchens to move about on the

walkway. Indeed, there is room for a wide wall (NIV, BBE) to surround the kitchens and still have them fully fit within the paved perimeter walkway of the outer courtyard.

Same size. The MT ends the verse with a *hophal* participle, "made for corners," "corner rooms," but the word is absent in the LXX, Vulgate, and Peshitta. Special Masoretic marks known as *puncta extraordinaria* are present over the word, suggesting that it may be a marginal scribal comment that has made its way into the text. Along with most modern English translations, I omit this final Hebrew word.

46:23. *Ledge [of building stones].* A row of masonry, forming a stone ledge, ran around the inside walls of the kitchen areas. Such encircling masonry would contain the heat of the cooking fires and shield the walkways and walls outside the kitchens. Perhaps the masonry helped support grates or plates, providing cooking surfaces for pots, kettles, and pans.

Cooking fires. If the *hapax legomenon mĕbaššĕlôt* refers to places for the kitchens' cooking fires (NIV, NLT), these would lie under the stone ledges, heating cooking surfaces above. The term "hearth" in the NRSV, NJPS, and CEB likely refers to the floors of such fireplaces. Although *bāšal* often means "boil," the *mĕbaššĕlôt* are not actual "boiling places" (NASB, BBE, KJV; cf. NET), which v. 24 terms *mĕbaššĕlîm.*

46:24. *Kitchens.* The guide, referring to all four kitchens, here names them as "houses of boilings/cookings." The first noun in such a plural construct chain is usually plural (see *BHS* critical apparatus). However, in rare cases, such as here, the chain is treated as "a compact block," a "single noun," in the plural (Joüon, 472, sec. 136 n).

[Levitical] ministers. The exact phrase "ministers of the house" that appears here occurred earlier in 45:5, which specifically names these ministers as the "Levites." Also see 44:11, where the Levites are those "serving/ministering [*mĕšārĕtîm*] in the temple," and 44:14, where the Levites preside over the temple's duties (in both verses, *bayit* means the temple complex as a whole; see Notes *Serving in the temple complex* on 44:11 and *Temple complex* on 44:14; Stevenson 1996, 94). Against Tuell (2009, 323), these Levite ministers are fully separate from the Aaronide and Zadokite ministers treated in 40:44–46. Ezekiel follows HS (in Num 18:2–5) in barring Levites from the specific spheres of duty referenced in 40:44–46. See Comments on 40:28–46.

Cook. Only sacrificial meat offered to God is roasted and burned directly in a fire, with pleasing odor. (The roasting of lambs at Passover is an exception.) The cooking done in the priestly and public temple kitchens, by contrast, mostly entailed boiling (Niditch 2004, 59), although *bāšal* can also refer to roasting (see 2 Chr 35:13). The hearths up in the priestly kitchens were used for some baking as well as boiling (Ezek 46:20).

Comments

For almost three chapters, Ezekiel has remained where his guide had left him as of 44:4, standing between the main altar and the front of the temple building. There, he has received the direct divine instruction on temple ordinances marked by messenger formulas in 44:6, 45:18, 46:1, and 46:16. Now that God has concluded the delivery of the temple ordinances, the time has come for the guide to lead Ezekiel out of the altar yard.

Guide and prophet do not proceed out through the north gate tower, through which they had entered the inner courtyard (44:4). Rather, they go through a

passageway facing the gate tower's western side, which 42:9 earlier described. This passageway, I argued earlier, allows the utopia's priests to bring sacrificed meat to the sacristy dining areas without leaving the raised priestly platform, the restricted inner court of the temple compound (see Note *Eastern entrance at its foot* on 42:9). Ezekiel moves down the corridor between the sacristies (see 42:4) and stands amid the "priests' holy chambers." From here, the prophet can see that there are outdoor cooking installations at the far end of the walkway. Boiling and baking of the priestly portions of sacrifices take place here.

The careful attention to the processing and routing of animal sacrifices, with which the text now concerns itself, may strike some modern readers as brutish or Byzantine. Parallels from across religions, however, illustrate intense reverence and human mutuality issuing from a tightly rule-governed slaughter and festive consumption of sacrifices. Thus, St. Gregory details the specific animal parts that Christian priests in fourth-century CE Armenia must receive from sacrificial victims. The Armenian Christians believed that the death of these animal sacrifices had atoning power, effectively casting away the sins of those presenting them. Both priests in their own company and entire congregations, joined together in fellowship, feasted on animal sacrifices while praying with intense devotion to God (Conybeare 1903, 63, 65).

Earlier, in interpreting Ezekiel 40, I outlined the movement of offerings through the sacrificial system of Ezekiel's utopian temple. Ezekiel 40:38–43 described butchering tables and washing installations associated with the temple's inner gatehouses. After their slaughtering, entirely burned offerings were moved to the gatehouse's annex up on the raised inner courtyard for washing, presumably by the Levites. The carcass then went to the central altar for burning by the Zadokites (except for the animal's skin; see Lev 7:8).

Purification and reparation offerings, unlike entirely burned offerings, furnished the meat for the priestly kitchens described in the present passage. They were "most holy offerings" that must be kept up inside the inner courtyard after being slaughtered, as 42:13 instructed. (On the way that the present passage interlocks with 42:13, see Note *Reparation . . . purification . . . grain offerings* on 46:20.) The "most holy offerings" remain off the outer courtyard, away from the public. Thus, the sacristies and priests' kitchens are definitely up in the inner courtyard, as v. 21 specifically indicates in stating that Ezekiel proceeds from amid the sacristies "out into the outer courtyard."

The carefully designed layout of the temple allows the priests to avoid carrying "most holy offerings" through the outer courtyard. They cannot inadvertently endanger the public by communicating "negative holiness" to them (v. 20; see also 42:14, 44:19; Lev 6:27 HS). (On negative holiness, see Note *Endangering the people* on 46:20.) Here again, the vision reminds us that the housing of a volatile, numinous presence is highly challenging. As Sommer (2009, 97, 120–21) aptly observes, God's indwelling represents the presence of the *tremendum,* that which will always remain unnerving and unsafe.

The immense danger of negative holiness is tolerable—in fact, desirable—because it creates the peculiar hierarchical matrix of Zadokite theology transmitting God's *positive* holiness. Now, with God's dangerous, reactive Presence in place, positive holiness, as Joosten (1996, 128) puts it, "may radiate outwards to human beings (or objects) who can thereby become holy in a derived sense." Obediently imitating the God in their midst, the Israelites "absorb some of the holiness proceeding from the godhead in his sanctuary and thus become holy themselves." Holiness is likely tangible, mate-

rial in quality, here—a sort of plasma, communicable through physical contact (see Lev 6:18 [MT v. 11], 27 [MT v. 20]; Exod 29:37, 30:29). Olyan (2000, 121) shows how HS both conceives of holiness as "widely distributed" and understands that God actively makes Israel holy (173–74 n. 3). He finds that Israel's holiness in HS is not merely potential but rather accrues to it continually as a process of sanctification by YHWH.

Israel's ongoing sanctification through life in God's indwelled land was always the Zadokites' hope. Thus, one key sense of Ezek 36:20 is that human transformation would have to be expected, given a localized incarnation of divinity. The Holy Land of Israel, as an extension of the temple where God dwells, and thus rippling with the influence of God's immanent presence, demands moral purity and human ennoblement (Num 35:34 HS). The sin and uncleanness of the exiles, Ezek 36:20 laments, has undermined belief in a miracle-land of God on the part of the nations. What sort of Eden-land would spawn such miscreants as the exiles? How could a people, fresh from a sanctifying land, be this depraved? No, this land and its God stand discredited!

To paraphrase this sense of Ezek 36:20, earth's nations are saying, "These sorry specimens are the Lord's people [ha!], and it is from his land [ha!] that they have gone into exile!" The LXX, for its part, interprets the text in this way, reading, "These are a people of the Lord, and it is out of his land that they have come" (cf. NJB, REB).

In vv. 21–24, the guide leads Ezekiel out from the sacristies into the temple's outer courtyard, where he inspects four public cooking areas in the corners of the complex (see fig. 2, locations BB). Unlike with the priestly kitchens, the text supplies considerable detail concerning the dimensions and structure of these small courtyards. They are constructed to handle lots of food and smoke. There are plenty of hearths for cooking fires, and stone ledges allow for the placement of cooking pots (cf. Zech 14:21).

As the text sketches out real working kitchens, it reinforces how sanctification impacts life's sooty, culture-packed, nitty-gritty corners. Ezekiel's utopian world includes God's feasting and humanity's feasting, differing but profoundly interconnecting. Divine life extends out from the temple's center, joining the transcendent to the social, the raw to the cultural. As Niditch (2004, 59) explains, working kitchens are filled with cooking implements, manufactured pots, and inventive, culturally specific protocols and recipes. Kitchen cooking is a "complicated and acculturated means of food preparation." Up on the central altar, in contrast, burning meat goes straight up in flames to God. Smoking fat portions (suet)—the best portions (cf. Gen 45:18, "fat of the land")—generate "a pleasing aroma to the Lord" (Lev 3:16 NLT, HS). Similarly, in Homeric religion, the gods on Olympus delight in the hunger-allaying smell and smoke of burning suet (*Iliad* 1.315–17). A Hittite temple dedication text describes the image of a deity smeared with a sacrificed sheep's blood and the fat of the sheep fully burned (*COS* 1.70.176, sec. 32).

How specifically does Ezekiel's utopia bridge the transcendent and the public, the raw and the cultural, the inner and the outer here? The well-being offerings of the populace are slaughtered at the inner gatehouses, down at the tables astride the gatehouse steps (see 40:40). Here, through the butchering of beasts at a liminal threshold, an interconnection is established between the transcendent and the public. The nature of this staircase zone as a cosmic threshold is uniquely emphasized by the intricate tiered structure of the temple complex of Ezekiel 40–48. Two ontological spheres join here.

Different animal parts move out from the threshold in opposite directions. The blood and fatty portions go through the inner gatehouse into the hands of the Zadokite

priests, who alone have charge of the central altar. God soon delights in the food offering and its pleasing aroma (see 1 Sam 2:15–16; Lev 3:3–17, 9:18–21; Num 18:17). The sacrificial meats, however, revert to their owners for cooking in the outer courtyard kitchens (Ezek 46:21–24) and for eating in the worshipers' chambers (40:17; see fig. 2, location B). Ezekiel's choreography is distinctive in describing sacrificial blood and flesh moving through sharply defined, hierarchically related spatial divisions of holiness. The highly tiered nature of this system reinforces the reader's perception that the system revolves around interconnecting the holy/numinous/inner and the public/profane/outer Israelite spheres.

To review and reiterate, the utopia's rules for processing sacrificial offerings are more hierarchical than previous temple regulations. Ezekiel 44:11 instructed that the Levites should henceforth do all animal slaughtering, not lay offerers, as was formerly allowed. Now in 46:21–24 we learn that it is also no longer the public (see 1 Sam 2: 15–16) but the Levites who cook the well-being sacrifices. Newly defined distinctions and boundaries in the utopia both separate the holy from the common and allow a sacrificial choreography to interconnect these two spheres in a newly clear and pronounced manner.

The Sacred River (47:1–12)

47 [1]Next [the guide] brought me back to the entrance of the temple building. Look: water was streaming out eastward from beneath the temple's elevated platform, since the temple faced east. The water was flowing down from under the southern side of the temple's [façade], past the south side of the [central] altar. [2][The man] then took me out [of the temple compound] by way of the [outer] north gatehouse and led me around on the outside to the outer gatehouse that faces east. And look: the water was gurgling out on the south side [of the gatehouse].

[3]As the man went on eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off 580 yards [downstream to the southeast, about ⅓ mile]. He had me go through the water; the water came up to my ankles. [4]Then he measured [another] 580 yards and had me go through the water; it came up to my knees. Another 580 yards farther [downstream], he had me go through waist-deep water. [5]He measured 580 yards more, and there it was a river that I was not able to cross [by wading]. It was too deep to cross except by swimming. The water had swollen into what could be crossed only by swimming—an impassable river. [6a]Then he said to me, "Human One, are you seeing this?"

[6b]Then [the guide] brought me back, returning me to the riverbank. [7]When I got there, Look! On the banks of the river were very many trees, on both sides. [8]He said to me, "These waters are flowing out toward the eastern region and will go down into the Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea—the sea of stagnant waters. Then the waters [of the Dead Sea] are healed [and become fresh]. [9]Swarms of living creatures will thrive where the double river flows. Fish will abound. These waters go there [down into the Jordan Valley] so that [the waters of the Dead Sea] may be healed [and become fresh]. Everything returns to life where the river flows. [10]People will stand fishing on its banks from Engedi to Eneglaim. The shores will have nets drying in the sun. They will catch an abundance of fish there of all kinds, a variety like that of the Great Sea [the Mediterranean]. [11]Its swamps and marshes, however, will not become fresh. They will serve to supply salt. [12]On each bank of the river all kinds of trees will grow to provide food.

Their leaves will never wither and their fruit will never be exhausted. They will produce fresh fruit every month, because of their water source. It's out from the sanctuary that their waters come flowing. Their fruit will provide food and their leaves will be used for healing people."

Notes

47:1. *Elevated platform.* The term *miptan* can refer to a "threshold" (NRSV, NIV, CEB) or "doorstep" (BBE), as in 46:2. Some scholars have suggested, however, that it can also refer to the platform or dais upon which a god's statue or a king's throne rested (see KBL: "podium"; Ezek 47:1 NJPS: "platform," NEB: "terrace"; Bodi 2015, 25 nn. 12, 13). Thus, the inner shrine of the ʿAin Dara temple had a raised platform (a podium or dais), and the Tell Tayinat temple had both podium and pedestal (see Monson 2000, 28, 31). In the preexilic Jerusalem temple, the sacred rock (El-Sakhrah) likely elevated the adytum (see fig. 7, location A; Ritmeyer 2006, 288–91; on the rock, see also Schäfer 1974, 125–28). In Ezekiel, the divine dais and throne, the place of God's feet (43:7), is the entire temple building, sitting atop its raised terrace. The NJPS rendering of *miptan* in 47:1 is thus apt: "Water was issuing from below the platform of the Temple" (see also the NEB: "from under the terrace of the temple"; cf. Zeph 1:9 NEB: "temple terrace"). Near Eastern parallels include the flowing jugs under the feet of enthroned Ea in a clay seal of Gudea (fig. 9; Bradshaw and Head 2013, 32). So too, paired river goddesses, holding flowing vases, stood down astride the base of the stairs to the raised inner sanctuary of Ishtar at the Mari palace referenced above (ca. 1778–1758 BCE; see Comments on 40:1–27; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 315, 317, fig. 9.19; Stager 2000, 40; Bodi 2009, 495; Bradshaw and Head 2013, 10–11, 30–31). The same goddesses stand beneath the frame with Ishtar in the Mari investiture panel (see fig. 4, location C). Note, however, that *two* raised platforms supported Ezekiel's temple building. One formed the base of the entire inner courtyard of the sanctuary (see Ezek 40:31, 34, 37; fig. 2, location D). If this large terrace is in view, the sacred stream would likely have run below it, underground, until it surfaced in plain view. More likely, however, Ezekiel's *miptan* is the smaller terrace supporting the temple building proper (40:49, 41:8; see fig. 2, inset, location R). Ezekiel's location in 47:1 at the "entrance of the temple building" likely means he is in direct sight of this smaller terrace (cf. the use of *bayit* in 43:5, 44:4, 44:17). Ezekiel 9:3 and 10:4, 18 may use the term *miptan* of the same foundation platform (see the NJPS and NEB renderings of these verses). If so, Ezekiel knows from experience that the locale may become a contact point of heaven and earth.

From under. The MT syntax is awkward, reading literally, "flowing down from under, from the right side." Perhaps *mittaḥat* was duplicated erroneously from earlier in the verse. It is lacking in the LXX, Vulgate, and Peshitta.

Southern side. The Hebrew adjective not only means "right" but also "southern" (see 1 Kgs 6:8, 7:39). For this use in Ezekiel, see 10:3 and 16:46. As the narrative proceeds, it becomes apparent that the flow of water is purposely oriented both east *and* south. The southeastern orientation directs the healing waters specifically to the barren, arid Judean desert region south of Jerusalem and left of the Dead Sea, where their transformative effect will be most pronounced and shocking (see Image: https://goo.gl/qZ2AHM).

Figure 9. Sumerian seal of Gudea of Lagash, Tello, Iraq, ca. 2150 BCE. Drawing by Margaret Wohler.

47:2. *[Outer] north gatehouse.* Again, the text reinforces the permanent closure of the outer east gatehouse (44:2, 4; 46:9). See Comments on 44:1–3.

Faces east. The MT syntax is awkward and should be emended by transposing *derek* and *happôneh* so as to parallel the word order of 43:1. See *BHS* critical apparatus.

Gurgling. The Hebrew is onomatopoeic here, making the sound of water gurgling and running: *mayim mĕpakkîm min-hakkātēp.* The verb *pākâ* is of special interest, since its cognate noun, which means "flask" or "small jug," appears to take its name on the basis of the sound of water gurgling from a jug mouth. Fascinatingly, handheld jugs gurgling out living waters appear commonly in the art of ancient Near Eastern temples. Bodi (2015) calls the commonly occurring image of the jug "the motif of the flowing vase." A dolerite (basalt) relief of the fountain at an Assur temple (eighth to seventh century BCE) shows such a jug emitting four streams, from which deities and priests of the god Ea draw holy water (Keel 1978, 140, fig. 185). These are the cosmic waters of paradise. Another, especially relevant, example is the statue from Mari of a female deity holding a flowing vase (Note *Elevated platform* on 47:1). The statue was rigged internally with plumbing, so that water literally flowed through her jug. As noted, the same goddess holding her flowing vase appears in double representation in the Mari investiture panel (see fig. 4, location C; Keel 1978, 142–44, fig. 191; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 315–16, fig. 9.18). The paired goddesses with vases are positioned under and to the far sides of a higher frame depicting the inner holy place of the goddess Ishtar. This

parallels Ezekiel's waters of life flowing from down under the temple terrace, out from one side.

47:3. *Measuring line.* Heretofore, the guide has determined dimensions using his "measuring stick," although 40:3 did take notice of his linen cord (*pātîl*). Now, he begins using the *qaw* (measuring line; a term echoed in Zech 1:16). Switching from the stick to the line allows for measuring greater distances—here, 580 yards at a time. For discussion of the measuring stick and line, which morphed over time into the well-known "rod and ring," see Note *Cord . . . stick* on 40:3. By coincidence, the rod and ring appear in the Mari investiture panel. In the panel's center, in the upper frame, Ishtar, her foot characteristically on her lion, hands the king of Mari both rod and ring, sealing his investiture (see fig. 4, location D). The Ur-Nammu Stela depicts a parallel investiture scene (ca. 2100 BCE; see Note *Cord . . . stick* on 40:3).

580 yards. If the "long cubit" is 21 inches, then 1,000 cubits is about 1,750 feet (cf. NET, NLT) or 580 yards (more exactly, 583 ⅓ yards), about a third of a mile or roughly the length of five football fields.

47:4. *Waist-deep. Motnāyim* here means the body's midpoint (BBE; cf. Ezek 1: 27, 8:2), the waist. *Motnāyim* can also be a specific term for the region of the hips and loins (NASB, ASV, KJV), where undergarments and belts are worn and where swords are hung.

47:5. *Impassable river.* The term *naḥal* usually means "torrent" or "wadi" but more generally can mean a stream or even a river (Lev 11:9, 10; Isa 11:15; Qoh 1:7). Interestingly, the LXX thinks of a rushing torrent, the force of whose waters, rather than their depth, precludes passage: "The water was violently rushing as the rush of a wadi."

47:6. *Human One.* Ezekiel was last addressed this way at 44:5. This is the final such address in the book, where the characteristic phrase occurs some ninety-three times. Up against the preternatural miracle of the ever-expanding river, Ezekiel must certainly feel "human," that is, very much put in his place as finite, frail, mortal, and humble.

Are you seeing this? The interrogative syntax has exclamatory nuance, insisting to Ezekiel that he is really seeing this unbelievable miracle (see Joüon, 574, sec. 161 b). The rendition in the VOICE translation is apt: "Have you seen anything like this?," and Ezek 8:12 is an instructive parallel: "Human One, are you seeing this?" In fact, in the echo of 8:12 there is a striking rhetorical reversal of affairs. Earlier, the elders of Israel could *not* imagine the reality of the Lord's presence in their midst, even though God *was* in fact there. They say, "The Lord does not see us, the Lord has forsaken the land" (8:12). In the utopian vision, by contrast, Ezekiel is assured that the astounding cosmic waters are real, that the Lord's tangible presence is undeniable. The incredulity expressed in 8:12 finds profound reversal here in 47:6, as sheer wonder dispels all doubts about God's presence.

47:7. *Many trees.* In ancient Near Eastern depictions of cosmic streams, a symbolic tree or plant is often associated with the sacred waters of life. Thus, in the Mari investiture panel, a seedling tree arises from the jug held by the deity (see fig. 4, location 3). The scene is reminiscent of God's tree of life growing in Eden, a mountain garden from which four sacred rivers flow down into the world (Gen 2:10–14). Four hundred years earlier, the tree appears in the Sumerian seal of Gudea (see fig. 9; Bradshaw and Head 2013, 32). In Gudea's seal, as in Ezek 47:7, there are multiple sacred trees.

The New Testament book of Revelation leaves no doubt that it understands the trees of Ezekiel 47 to represent the garden of Eden's tree. Revelation 22:1–2, like Ezekiel, speaks of a group of trees representing the one archetypal tree. The passage reads, "On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." The references to "fruit each month" and to "healing" recall the same ideas as they appear in Ezek 47:12.

47:8. *Jordan Valley.* The MT's term "Arabah" came to designate the arid steppe in southern Judah west and south of the Dead Sea but here probably retains its earlier and more general application to the entire Jordan rift valley west of the Jordan River (cf. 2 Kgs 25:4–5). Figure 10, location A, shows the general location of the waters. At a later time, the Qumran community probably located itself where they imagined Ezekiel's sweet waters meeting the Dead Sea. At that locale, they could best await the miraculous transformation of the land associated with the coming reign of God.

Stagnant waters. The MT's verbal form *hammûṣā'îm,* a *hophal* participle from the root *yāṣā',* would state that "being made to flow into the sea, the waters [there] become healed" (see ESV, NJB, GNT, NASB). The unusual and pleonastic wording suggests, however, emendation to the root *ḥāmaṣ,* "be bitter, salty" (*HALOT*) or to *ṣāwā',* "be polluted." Thus, the NABR speaks of "polluted waters of the sea," the NJPS of "the sea of foul waters," and the REB of "the sea whose waters are noxious." I follow the Syriac (cf. NRSV, NET) and speak of "stagnant waters" (also see Allen 1990, 273).

Healed. The basic idea of the root *rāpā'* entails restoring and preserving. For the use of the verb in the *niphal* of the cleansing of polluted water, see 2 Kgs 2:22.

47:9. *Swarms . . . will thrive.* The Hebrew syntax is best paraphrased to yield good English here. Taken more woodenly, the text reads, "And it will come about that every living creature that swarms in every place where the double river goes will live."

Double river. The masculine noun "river" appears here in the dual (*naḥălayim*), "double rivers" or "paired rivers." Bodi (2015) offers the attractive interpretation that the dual form echoes Mesopotamian texts and iconography depicting the sacred river, where it tends to have two great branches (see the discussion in the Comments). A seventh-century BCE incantation from the collection of Ashurbanipal speaks of deities in a sanctuary at the "mouth of the two rivers." Similarly, the Gilgamesh epic describes the Noah figure, Utnapishtim, dwelling forever "at the mouth of the (two) rivers," where lies the garden of paradise. Iconography on the façade of the Ishtar/Inanna temple at Uruk (fourteenth century BCE) depicts twin rivers flowing from sacred jugs (Pergamon Museum, Berlin; see Bodi 2009, 497). Even earlier (ca. 2150 BCE), a neo-Sumerian statue of Gudea, ruler of Lagash, similarly shows twin sacred rivers emanating from his vase and flowing down the right and left sides of his body (Louvre, AO 22126, searchable online). Here the ruler is a vicar of the gods, partaking in their life-giving role. Removed from a Babylonian milieu, Zech 14:8 in echoing Ezekiel 47 seems to have missed the allusion to Mesopotamia's twinned rivers. It moved in a literalistic direction and imagined two separate rivers emanating from the temple and flowing in opposite directions.

Fish will abound. The MT speaks literally of "very many fish." The motif finds parallel expression in several of the Near Eastern sacred streams just referenced. Thus, the Mari investiture panel has a great many fish swimming up and down the rivers of life (see fig. 4, center lower frame; Akkermans and Schwartz 2003, 315–16, fig. 9.18).

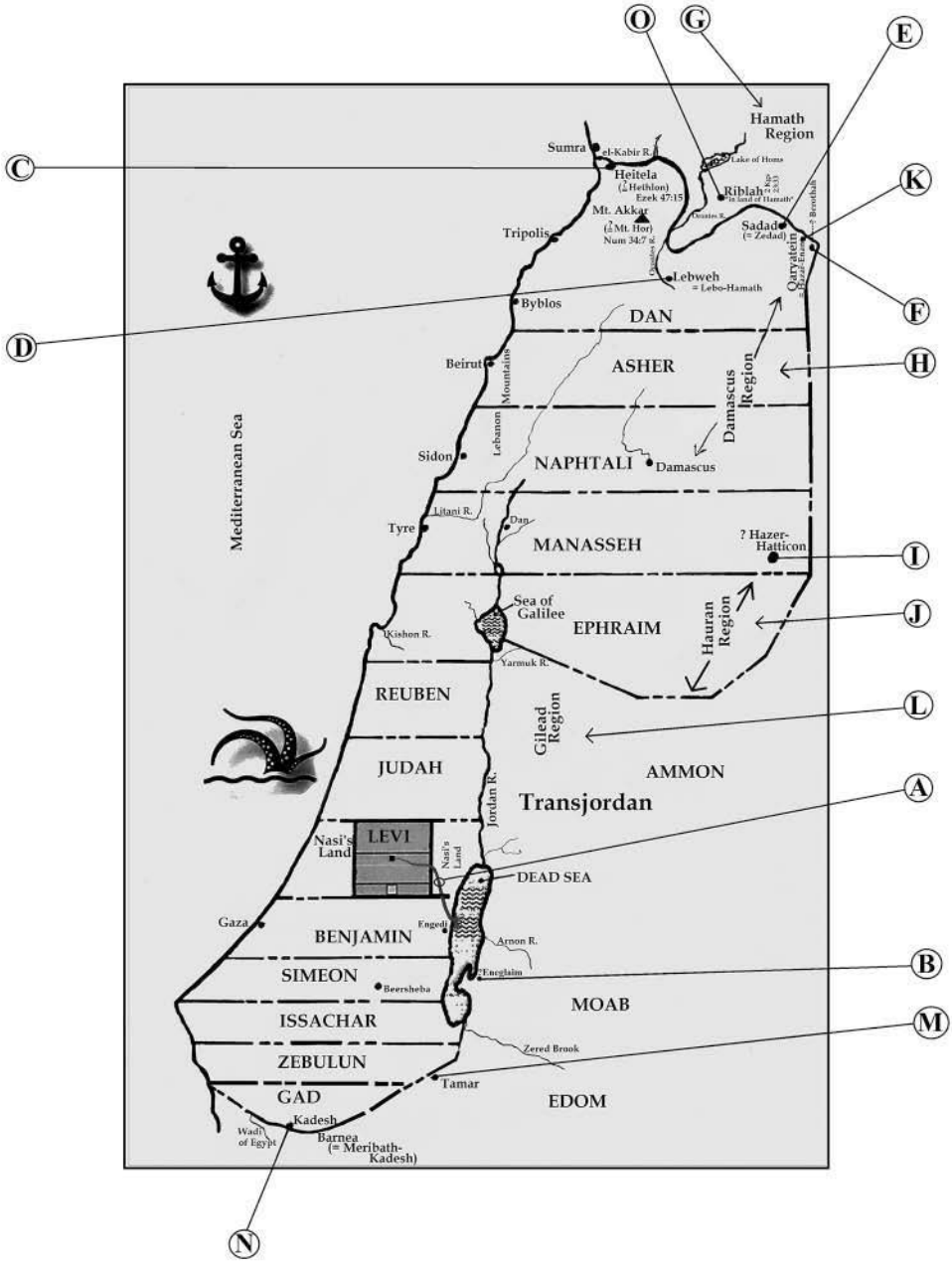


Figure 10. Ideal land boundaries and tribal allotments. Drawing by the author. Key: A = Sacred river, B = Eneglaim, C = Hethlon?, D = Lebo-Hamath, E = Zedad, F = Berothah, G = Hamath region, H = Damascus region, I = Hazer-Hatticon, J = Hauran region, K = Hazar-Enan, L = Gilead region, M = Tamar, N = Meribath-kadesh, O = Riblah.

Several centuries earlier, on the statue of Gudea just cited, fish are readily visible swimming in the double sacred rivers flowing down the ruler's body. Seal impressions of Ea, god of the Apsu (fresh water), picture fish in the twin waters flowing out from his shoulders (Tsumura 2005, 136). (For an example, see fig. 1 and Collon 1990, 45, fig. 32.)

Returns to life. The diction here has strong connotations of bringing back life (CEV, GNT), even of restoration from death (VOICE: "everything will come alive!"; cf. CJB). Thus, *HALOT* lists 47:9 together with Ezek 37:3, 5, 9, 14 under *ḥāyâ, qal* 4, "return to life" (also see 2 Kgs 13:21; Isa 26:14, 19).

47:10. *Engedi to Eneglaim.* These are two springs near the shores of the Dead Sea. The location of Eneglaim is uncertain, but several interpreters argue it is on the Dead Sea's lower eastern shore (see fig. 10, location B; Zimmerli 1983, 513–14). In this view, Engedi and Eneglaim were chosen so as to form a merism, a figure of speech signifying the entirety of the sea by mentioning the shores on both of its sides.

47:11. *Serve to supply salt.* On a practical level, some sources of salt must remain in the land to supply the temple's rituals (see 43:24). On a symbolic and theological level, Ezekiel echoes HS's association of salt with God's perpetual commitment to a covenantal relationship with Israel (see Note *Salt* on 43:24). The reference to salt here serves as an indirect reminder to readers of the permanence of God's indwelling of the ideal temple.

47:12. *Healing people.* Bodi (2009, 498) helpfully notes that a tree of healing grows near the cosmic river in the Sumerian-Akkadian incantation referenced above (see Note *Double river* on 47:9): "In Eridu there is a black *kiškanu*-tree, growing in a pure place. Its appearance is lapis-lazuli, erected on the primeval waters-*apsū* . . . at the mouth [i.e., source] of the two rivers." Priests would recite the incantation text as part of rituals healing the sick.

Comments

Here near the close of the temple vision, the sanctuary complex suddenly comes alive with a flow of miraculous water. The rhetoric of the narrative draws readers into the marvel of Ezekiel's experience, leading us along with the prophet and his guide on a tour observing the water's transcendent origins, marvelous expansion, and amazing effects. The point of origin and exact course of the sacred river are not quite certain (see the Notes), but the route of the tour does have Ezekiel double back to the compound's center and then completely outside again for the third time (see Duguid 1999, 520 n. 16).

By now there is no doubt that throughout the temple tour of Ezekiel 40–48 the prophet has been engaged in what Carl Jung and others have called circumambulating a labyrinth or mandala. Moving with Ezekiel, winding around the sacred center, but never fully entering it, readers have been practicing a devotion, engaging in a literary-spiritual exercise. They have been imaginatively inhabiting and traversing the matrix of humility and relationality so dear to the Zadokites (see Noys 2000, 14, and the Comments on 42:1–14).

The prophet's itinerary had left off at 46:21, at the public kitchens of the temple's outer courtyard. Now the guide leads Ezekiel back toward the "the entrance of the temple," probably the façade of the temple building proper. The term *miptan* in

v. 1, though often translated "threshold" (see NRSV), actually means "raised platform" here (see NJPS, NEB, and Note *Elevated platform* on 47:1). It is the foundation terrace of the temple building (40:49, 41:8; see fig. 2, inset, location R), the dais of the Presence (43:7).

Ezekiel's utopian temple uses what is, in effect, a massive stone lid to seal off all watery chaos from the temple and the world. A mammoth solid platform or dais under the temple building now forms the utopian equivalent of the crystal platform of God's throne-chariot (Ezek 1:22–23, 25–26; 10:1; Rev 15:2, 21:1). The platform, the *rāqîaʿ*, is the solid cosmic expanse known from Gen 1:6 to hold back noxious, aqueous chaos from the created order (cf. Gen 7:11). Note that Exod 24:10 and its image of blue stone pavement beneath God's feet is close to Ezekiel here, both in its language and in its anthropomorphism. The text is usually considered to be the Elohist strand (E), but is perhaps later, HS material. (Note the phrase "God of Israel" [as in Num 16:9], the resort to similitude [Lev 14:35, Num 9:15], and the anthropomorphic diction of God's feet [Ezek 43:7, Zech 14:4].)

Ezekiel's stone *miptan* corks all cosmic chaos, not merely subterranean chaos lying below the temple. This is crucial, because Gen 7:11 and 8:2 speak of chaos-waters bursting out from above in heaven as well as from under the earth. This parallels the "surging of the two *thmt*-waters" in *KTU* 1.19 [1Aqht]: I:45. Also parallel are the assumptions of Ps 107:24–26 and Jonah 1. The Lord is God of sea storm *and* rainstorm. Thus, God's mountain throne lies at the world's horizon, at the meeting of sky and ocean. There, God is enthroned above both upper chaos-water and lower chaos-water.

In Ugaritic myth, El dwells in the midst of the two *thmt*-waters, the meeting of the "double-deep" (Clifford 1972, 49). This "double-deep" of El's abode is not the river of life, in its dual, Mesopotamian form (see Note *Double river* on 47:9), but rather chaos split in two, like monster Tiamat's dead body. Tsumura (1989, 151) thus rightly draws attention to the coupling of the two chaos-waters in the composite Ugaritic deity *Šmm-w-Thm* as well as in the couple *Šamūma* (Heaven-Water) and *Tahāmatu* (Ocean-Water).

Alternatively, El's double-deep may refer not to the pairing of the two mighty chaos-waters, but to the pairing of chaos-water and fresh/sweet water. In other words, the pair in mind may be Tiamat (ocean water) and Apsu (fresh water). These dual primal waters appear in the image of Ea/Enki treated shortly (see fig. 1).

Whatever the exact idea of the double-deep is—and we need not assume that there was always one unambiguous, fixed idea—the dual primal waters were able to be "corked" at the cosmic center, at the origin of all creation. In preexilic times, the Jerusalem temple had this role atop the primal hill/*ṭabbûr* (e.g., Pss 29:10; 46; 48; 93). Ezekiel's utopian temple, set upon the cosmic mountain (Ezek 40:2), now replaces it, anchoring all terrestrial holiness.

At 47:1b, Ezekiel is startled to observe fresh water flowing from the temple's stone *miptan.* "Look: water was streaming out eastward from beneath the temple!" How does a release of fresh, sweet water jibe with the role of the temple dais as a cosmic cork?

Paradoxically, ancient temples both capped the primal deep and furnished irrigation. Thus, the psalms speak of the Zion temple not only as the dais where God sits "enthroned over the flood" (Ps 29:10) but also as the home of God's "fountain of life"

(Ps 36:9), issuing the river of God's delights (Ps 36:8). Carvalho (1992, 188) and Tuell (1992, 69–70) note how Gudea Cylinder B (14.19–24) links temple construction and the flow of pure, sweet water. Indeed, the new temple's jars and goblets become "like the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, continually carrying abundance" (Cylinder B 17.10–11).

The theme is widespread. In the Enuma Elish, Marduk drills holes in the head of slain Tiamat, the sea dragon, in order to release earth's deep springs. He then opens her dead eyes to unleash the Tigris and the Euphrates (Tsumura 2005, 136 n. 56). Genesis 2:14 names these great twin rivers as among those flowing out of Eden, God's garden, and, at least in part, they may stand behind the dual form of the sacred river in many Mesopotamian representations (see Note *Double river* on 47:9). In Ugaritic myth, El puts a lid on all primeval waters, but also ladles from them the rivers that nourish the earth. Repeatedly, we have the enigma of sweet water issuing forth from neutralized chaos.

A stone cylinder seal of Gudea featuring Ea helps illuminate how Ezekiel 47 treats the temple platform as *both* a cork *and* a spigot. It specifically illustrates the juxtaposition of sweet, life-water and noxious, chaos-water in the netherworld. The dual subterranean presence of the two water types was well known in the ancient Near East.

In the Akkadian seal shown in figure 1, Ea sits in his underground chamber surrounded by the swirling waters of chaos (also see *ANEP* no. 684; Keel 1978, 48–49, fig. 43). His abode, the "chamber of Nammu," is in the Apsu, just above the underworld proper (Tsumura 2005, 135–36). The kneeling servant at the seal's right grasps a gatepost that holds back all chaos-water. Chaos also appears in the seal as the subdued animal below the foot of the large figure of Shamash holding a saw and stepping up. While chaos swirls outside Ea's chamber, the dual rivers of life stream from the god inside (see Note *Double river* on 47:9). The fish above the rivers assure us that the water is fresh and sweet (see Note *Fish will abound* on 47:9).

Amid subterranean chaos lies God's archetypal reservoir of life-giving water, the divine fountain of sweet Apsu streams. Biblical texts attesting to this include Gen 2:6; 49:25; Deut 33:13; Ps 74:15a; Prov 3:20; 8:24, 28; Ezek 31:4; and perhaps Job 36:27 (see Tsumura 2005, 105; Smith 2010, 59, 61). About two centuries later than Ezekiel, Plato (*Phaed.* 111c–12e) describes a subterranean chasm as the source of earth's rivers. Later still, texts in Enoch, including 1 En. 17:8, similarly speak of the mouth of the deep supplying earth's rivers.

Genesis 2:6 places the outlet of earth's sweet water in Eden, where "a stream [*ʾēd*] was welling up out of the earth and watering all the surface of the ground" (NABR; cf. CEB). The LXX, Aquila, the Vulgate, and the Peshitta all understand *ʾēd* as "spring," "fountain." The fountain is huge, irrigating "all the surface of the soil" (NJB; consult Tsumura 2005, 111). The great tree of "Eden" in Ezekiel 31, in the "garden of God" (v. 9), tapped this fountain: "Waters nourished it; the deep raised it up, because its streams flowed around the place where it was planted. From there, water trickled down to all the other trees" (v. 4, CEB). Ezekiel's temple is configured as Eden on earth, the fountain's locale. As James (1966, 143) notes, Ezekiel's "water-tree associations belong to the same cycle of ideas and images as the Tree of Life in the Eden story, and that of the Book of Enoch."

While the Gudea seal explains key interests of Ezekiel 47, the Zadokites would be highly uncomfortable with its dualism. To accept a deity surrounded by the volatile,

noxious waters of chaos would be horrific for them. Underworld chaos was an animate menace, a slithering Murk/*Düsternis* (see the Introduction). Compare Dante's grim words describing the "dark woods" of Sheol, a valley that pierced his heart with terror: "To tell about those woods is hard, so tangled and rough and savage that thinking of it now I feel the old fear stirring. Death is hardly more bitter" (*Inferno,* Canto 1). Thus, Ezekiel's utopia pushes to resolve the old archetypal tension between life force and chaos, the precarious balance between fecundity and death. To this end, 44:1–3 has already sealed the east gate, precluding all annual parades rehearsing nature's cyclical battle with sterility and death, such as those of Babylonia (see Comments on 44:1–3).

Ezekiel's *miptan* fully seals off Murk/*Düsternis,* entombing all deathful floodwaters. If the Lord still sits "enthroned over the flood" (Ps 29:10), then that flood is here fully nullified and eradicated. Marduk may *try* sitting upon Tiamat in the *akitu* house, but only the Lord flattens the monster for good! Paradoxically, as we have seen, the *miptan* is a spigot, not just a cork. It releases a sacred river (the gently flowing waters of Shiloah, see Isa 8:6; cf. Ps 46:4, Joel 3:18). As in Ps 36:9, "the fountain of life" is with God. The image of flowing jugs under the feet of enthroned Ea in another seal of Gudea is parallel (see fig. 9; see also Bradshaw and Head 2013, 32). Thus, early rabbinic speculation held that the Jerusalem temple's foundation stone *both* held back primeval chaos *and* regulated earth's irrigation with fresh water (Schäfer 1974, 125–28). James (1966, 144) summarizes the Mishnah's belief that the temple rose directly over the primordial abyss, the temple rock sealing its mouth. The stone thus functioned as the dual source of both "the beneficent fresh waters" and "the malignant *Tĕhom,* the source of the flood."

Ezekiel's rock-built foundation platform reappears later as the "first stone" of Zech 3:9 (NABR), which plugs up all netherworld threats. In Zech 4:7, Zerubbabel puts the cork permanently in its place, advancing cosmic rescue and rebirth. Zechariah does not domesticate the *cosmic* significance of defeating Murk/*Düsternis,* and neither should Ezekiel's readers. In this vein, I disagree with Block (1998, 697) that Ezekiel's focus is a "national agenda," his "own native land," and with Darr (2001, 1599) that the prophet's interests are narrow, exclusivist, and "parochial." Yes, Ezekiel understands God's battle with Murk to be waged in a confined, local arena. It is through these scandalously narrow terms of engagement, however, that God, as an anthropomorphic Presence, encounters the sting of chaos in vulnerability and defeats it within terrestrial experience.

According to Zech 3:9, Ezekiel's foundation platform—the first, primordial stone—has seven "facets" (*ʿênāyim*), which may actually mean *fountains,* "fountains of the deep" (see Prov 8:28). The LXX of Zech 3:9 may allude to God hewing channels in the primal rock, tapping into sweet water. More definitively, Zechariah 9–14 is directly familiar with Ezekiel's temple and its river. In Zech 13:1 and 14:8, as in Ezek 47:1–12, the temple directs God's sweet, living rivers from the temple out into the land (cf. Joel 3:18). Zechariah understands the waters to have the power to flush away sin and impurity. Clearly, temple springs provided ritual cleansing as well as irrigation. Milgrom (2012, 47) notes how the Delphi temple spring, called "Cassotis," served as the priestly laver.

Whereas the Septuagint translator markedly expands the sacred river's divine fertility, directing it up toward "Galilee" and down toward "Arabia" (47:8 LXX; cf. 39:6 LXX; see O'Hare 2010, 185–88), the earlier Hebrew text circumscribes the river's

effects. Darr (2001, 1599) is legitimately struck by "how precisely the regions through which the [sacred] river flows are located within the boundaries of Israel's homeland." The MT text, in contrast to the LXX, is particular about a southern and eastern orientation of the sacred waters. They flow directly into the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea. At least three reasons, however, explain the localized focus. It must not be interpreted as parochialism.

First, as they head south the sacred waters of life flow past the old locale of the "molten sea," south of the temple's altar (47:1; 1 Kgs 7:39). The observant reader takes note that the sea has fully disappeared in the utopian temple (cf. 40:38–49). An immense basin holding 12,000 gallons (1 Kgs 7:23–26, 44; 2 Chr 4:2–10), it had represented the cosmic abyss (Ballentine 2015, 109–11). It bore the name of the Canaanite god of chaos and conveyed primordial vastness through its shear enormousness by ancient standards.

As Tuell (2009, 290) astutely remarks, "As the bronze pillars *are* still present in Ezekiel's visionary temple (40:49), despite their destruction [2 Kgs 25:13–17], the significance of the absent sea is likely more theological than historical." Any iconography associated with the old Bronze Sea was too much: "The struggle and ambiguity the sea represents has no place" (290). In the ideal world of Ezekiel's utopia, there is no persistence of any such dangerous subterranean force, even in subdued, harnessed form. In the New Testament, Rev 21:1 affirms Ezekiel's vision: "The sea was no more."

As Ezekiel 47 clarifies, fresh, living waters now flow past the sea's old locale south of the temple's altar (47:1; 1 Kgs 7:39). Replacing the sea, their life-giving, fructifying power subsumes the energy of fertility represented by the rows of bull figures below the basin's rim and by the twelve bull statues supporting it from below (1 Kgs 7:25, 2 Kgs 16:17, 2 Chr 3:3, NABR). Interestingly, a huge 7-foot-wide limestone basin from Amathont on Cyprus along with two giant water basins in front of the ninth-century BCE Musasir temple in Urartu (northwest of Assur) have these bulls of fertility. So too, a ninth-century BCE bull from a temple court at Carchemish probably supported a huge basin (see Strong 2015, 48; Keel 1978, 139, figs. 183, 183a).

Second, the particular rhetoric of Ezekiel 47 directs the waters of life to the arid region left of the Dead Sea, where their transformative effect will have the most impact on Israel (see Note *Southern side* on 47:1). Seeing the miracle, people will react with wide-eyed amazement. All stubborn preexilic incredulity about God's presence, observed at places such as Ezek 8:12, will be reversed (see Note *Are you seeing this?* on 47:6).

Third, on a moral level, the particular orientation of the river is a matter of justice. Ezekiel 47 must prepare for a fair tribal distribution of land in Ezekiel 48. According to Ezekiel 47, the tribes of Benjamin, Simeon, and Issachar—all to be relocated south of the temple and bordering on the Dead Sea—will be able to enjoy Edenlike fertility in a region newly restored by healing miracle waters from the temple. Ezekiel's stress on fairness and local empowerment is unambiguous in the Hebrew diction of 47:14.

A conundrum appears in vv. 7 and 12, where, far from the temple's center, out in profane territory, there appears the tree(s) of life. Comparative evidence leads us to expect to find the tree(s) bundled with the sacred river, but not here—not outside the temple. One example is a thirteenth-century BCE Assyrian ivory inlay showing a mountain god (Stager 2000, 41). Here, the tree of life is certainly at the cosmic center.

The Mari investiture panel gives us another example. The vases of the river goddesses in the panel sprout their trees within the panel's *innermost* frames (see the trees labeled *3* in fig. 4). The trees lie in the *midst* of the Mari garden (cf. Gen 2:9). The inner frames correspond to Ishtar's inner shrine in the Mari palace. Should not the life-bearing trees of vv. 7 and 12 lie deep within Ezekiel's holy temple complex?

There, at the center of the utopian compound, the trees of life would be symbolically shielded by cosmic trees, trees corresponding to those labeled *2* in the image of the Mari panel (see fig. 4). We have seen these second-tier, cosmic trees represented by the temple's *ʾāb* (lintel, canopy) and by the palm trees of Ezek 41:18, 25. Farther out are the lower-tier palms labeled *1* in the side frames of the Mari panel. In Ezekiel's complex, these are the trees adorning the walls of the outer gatehouses (40:16, 22, 26, 31, 34, 37). (See Comments on 41:15b–26.)

The solution to the puzzle lies in renewed study of the iconography associated with the sacred river of life. Consider the placement of the tree of life in the Sumerian seal of Gudea (see fig. 9; also see Bradshaw and Head 2013, 32). The seedling of the tree, sprouting from a vase with flowing waters, passes from the god Ea into the hands of a mediating deity. Yes, the tree, with its power of life, originates within the numinous, central realm of the sacred; however, it is not confined there but is shared with the world. In fact, the jug in the deity's left hand clearly issues flowing water into multiple new jugs. These jugs, such as those on the floor beneath the god, may sprout with future seedlings of their own (cf. John 7:38).

Before readers' eyes, the transcendent power of the temple trickles out into quotidian life, outspreading as it proceeds. To grasp the dynamic, recall how the breath of the cherubim beneath God's throne extended from their bodies to infuse the four wheels representing earth's four corners (Ezek 1:20–21, 10:17). In observing the flow of divine life breath into the wheels, Ezekiel glimpsed God's sacred life power streaming toward each compass point. Perhaps Ezekiel 47 invites readers to imagine the cherubim of Gen 3:24 picking some seedlings of the tree of life from Eden and then sharing them with humanity. At least, that is what the mediating deity does in the seal of Gudea.

As elsewhere in the temple vision, Ezekiel 47 goes beyond a mere restoration of preexilic conditions. For the cherubim of Gen 3:24 to relax their guard on the tree of life amounts to a utopian transformation of human existence. In the ancient Gilgamesh epic, the hero failed to bring the miracle plant of life back home from its origins at the source of the two rivers (Gilgamesh 11:195–96; *ANET* 95). Gilgamesh's quest for immortality fails, but Ezekiel 47 refuses to accept that failure. God's ideal vision is *life* and more life (Ezek 16:6, 18:32). Thus, in Zech 2:1–5, the Zadokites associate the indwelling of God's glory with a population explosion of people and animals.

Stevenson (1996) offers helpful insight into the complementary dynamic by which the temple altar and the sacred river keep Israel's land alive, pure, and holy. The altar receives chaos/death drawn in from the land, expunging it. The river delivers holy life to the land, also healing it of chaos (Murk/*Düsternis*). Stevenson writes: "There is a healing of the Land. This is the function of 47:1–12 in which the stream comes from the House to heal the Land. It serves a similar function in the text to the role of the Altar in Chapter 43. The Altar cleanses the House of the effects of chaos, while the stream heals the land. The symbolism here is cosmic, involving a healing of the Land from the effects of chaos" (142).

The waters of the sacred stream are explicitly life-giving and healing, but do they convey holiness to the land? The question is appropriate, because in Zadokite thinking life force and holiness are conjoined (see Milgrom 1991, 46). Burgeoning life reveals holiness activated at God's initiative. Thus, in HS a staff sprouting with buds, flower blossoms, and almonds is God's sign of the sanctification and restricted access rights of Aaron's priestly line (Num 17:8 [MT 17:23]). Within Ezekiel's book, 36:37–38 especially firmly conjoins fecundity and sanctification. The text conjures the thought of sanctified multitudes burgeoning and teeming across the land of God's indwelling. The NRSV's phrase "flock for sacrifices" in v. 38 might better be rendered "consecrated flock" or even "sacred flock." The LXX translates the phrase as "holy sheep"; the CEB speaks of a "holy flock"; and the REB declares the flock to be "holy gifts." These sheep are *both* miraculously fertile *and* newly sanctified (cf. Lev 11:44; 19:2; 20:7–8, 26, all HS).

Are there warrants for seeing in Ezekiel 47, as in Num 17:8 and Ezek 36:37–38, a link between fecundity and sanctification? It is surely suggestive that God's river of fecund life flows directly by the holy altar (Ezek 47:1). According to Exod 29:37 and Lev 6:27a (MT 6:20a), the altar conveys holiness to what it touches. By such contact, atoning sacrifices gain the ability to sanctify (Exod 29:33; Lev 6:18, 27 [MT 6:11, 20]), and so, in some likely differing sense, might the river. Some such empowerment characterized the temple lavers, which the river replaces (see Exod 30:17–21). Talmudic sources describe the water of priestly lavers as "sanctifying" those who minister (m. Yoma 3:2).

The river of Ezekiel 47 does more than just sanctify priests for safe altar service. It transforms the profane world outside the temple precincts into a sort of holy temple court, as indicated by the fructified land's new associations with Eden (as in Ezek 36:35). The image of waters swarming with life (47:9, 12) transports the reader to creation time (Gen 1:20–21), and the tree-water associations of 47:7, 12 directly connote an Edenic realm (see Ezek 31:4, 9; 1 En. 25:3–6; James 1966, 143). As noted, what is startling in Ezekiel 47 is the appearance outside the temple of the most restricted, innermost sacred tree of Eden. As in Gen 2:9 and in the Mari investiture panel, the tree of life should lie within the temple's innermost restricted holy zone. First Enoch 25:4 states that "no creature of flesh has authority to touch it." For the sacred tree to be outside the temple, its fruit "to provide food" (47:12), reinforces what we have already observed of Ezekiel's utopia (see, e.g., Note *Side* on 42:16 and the Comments on 42:15–20, especially the discussion of how Ezekiel's structural system of concentric squares extends holiness *outside* the temple). The utopia's tiered design both restricts holiness and makes it accessible. Walls and gates limit access to the holy; well-being offerings and the sacred river distribute its benefits to all Israel.

Ezekiel's authors knew well the symbolic ties of Edenic gardens and temple courts. Thus, the utopian temple's iconography strongly connotes Eden. Earlier in the book, temple and Eden clearly interconnected in Ezek 28:11–19. In that passage, imagery of a holy Eden, "the holy mountain of God," includes temple symbols, especially priestly breastplate gems (28:13; see Wilson 1987). Now in Ezekiel 47, a river of Eden (Gen 2:10) is transforming the entire land into a holy courtyard. Thus, as if in holy precincts, the trees of Ezek 47:12 share in the verdant, lush energy of temple realms, like worshipers "green and full of sap," so that "in old age they still produce fruit" (Ps 92:12–14).

Boundary and Allotment Instructions (47:13–23)

47 [13]Message from the Sovereign Lord: Here are the boundaries of the land that all of you will receive as a hereditary possession for the twelve tribes of Israel, with the Joseph tribes receiving a double portion. [14]Take hereditary possession of it equally among yourselves, for I have raised my hand [in oath] to give it to your ancestors. This land falls to you by lot as a perpetual heritage.

[15]Here is the boundary of the land: On the north side, [the land's border runs] from the Great Sea [that is, the Mediterranean, eastward] in the direction of Hethlon, then through Lebo-Hamath to Zedad. [16][Then it will run to] Berothah and Sibraim, which are on the border between Damascus and Hamath, and [finally all the way down to] Hazer-Hatticon, on the border of the Hauran area. [17]So the [northern] border runs from the sea [eastward] to Hazar-Enan (on the [northern] border of Damascus), with Hamath's territory lying farther north. That is the northern boundary.

[18]The eastern border [picks up where the northern line leaves off, in the area] between Hauran's territory and that of Damascus. [It runs due south until the place] where Gilead and the land of Israel border one another, at which point the Jordan River forms the [land's major eastern] boundary, [a boundary that runs] down past the Dead Sea and as far south as Tamar. That is the eastern boundary.

[19]The southern border [runs southwest] from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, [and then along the] Wadi [of Egypt] to the Great Sea. That is the southern boundary.

[20]The western border [is formed by] the Great Sea, which sets the boundary [all the way north] up to the latitude of Lebo-Hamath. That is the western boundary. [21]Allocate this land among yourselves, among the tribes of Israel. [22]You shall have it fall to yourselves by lot as a perpetual heritage.

[Allocate the land] also among the resident aliens who are living among you and who have had descendants born here. You must treat them as native-born alongside the children of Israel. They shall have [land] fall [to themselves by lot] as a perpetual

heritage in the midst of the tribes of Israel. [23]In whatever tribe the resident alien lives, there you shall assign him his landed heritage—utterance of the Sovereign Lord.

Notes

47:13. *Message.* The prophetic messenger formula last appeared at 46:16. Just as ordinances for the temple, delivered with this formula (see 44:6, 45:18, 46:1), followed Ezekiel's tour of the sacred compound, so ordinances for the land follow his foray out into the territory that the sacred stream transforms.

Here. I am reading *zeh* (this (instead of *gēh,* a nonexistent word, as supported by the LXX (these borders), Targum, Vulgate, and all modern translations. Rashi cross-references the same appearance of *g* for *z* in the *ketiv*/*qere* at Ezek 25:7.

Boundaries. For a map of the boundaries of the land described here, see figure 10.

Double portion. With the Targum and Vulgate, I emend the plural to the dual, but the Hebrew syntax remains rather elliptical, and the clause may be a gloss. Manasseh and Ephraim form independent tribes, though their father Joseph was only one of Jacob's twelve sons. Thus, they receive one tribal band of territory each (see 48:4–6). The descendants of Jacob's son Levi, by contrast, do not receive their own band of territory but instead are granted living space within the central "thirteenth band," which contains the temple, the central city, and the territory of the ruling chieftain (see 48:8–22).

47:14. *Raised my hand.* On the Zadokite anthropomorphic God here, see Note *Raised my hand* on 44:12. The rare "lifted hand" formula (see also Ezek 20:6, 15), here designating a sign act for transferring land, also occurs in HS at Exod 6:8 and Num 14:30. I concur with Strine (2013, 94) that Ezek 47:14 shares key themes with these HS texts. The Zadokites emphasize God's control over the land, even when granting groups the right to live there. Strine is on weaker ground in insisting that this sign act is not any sort of oath.

47:15. *Hethlon.* Hethlon is of uncertain location but must lie between the upper Mediterranean coast of modern Lebanon to the west and Lebo-Hamath (modern Lebweh) to the east. Some maps conjecturally place it near the modern city of Heitela (see fig. 10, location C). That site would roughly correspond to the priestly border marker at Mount Hor (Num 34:7), if the latter can be identified with modern Mount Akkar.

Through Lebo-Hamath. The translation here is based on the LXX (which appears correct, on the basis of Num 34:8 and Ezek 48:1). Apparently, the MT transposed "Hamath" (see the start of MT v. 16) and "Zedad" and so reads, "by way of Hethlon to the entrance of Zedad, [16]Hamath." A traditional rendering of "Lebo-" is "entrance of," probably understood to mean "the way into Hamath" (BBE) or even "Hamath Pass" (NJB, GNT). For the record, Hamath is both a region and a city-state that is located about 93 miles north of Hethlon and Lebo-Hamath in central Syria on the Orontes River (see Note *Damascus and Hamath* on 47:16). But Lebo-Hamath is not merely a general area of passage but a specific site name, since the more generic idea of an "entrance of Hamath" does not fit the syntax in 1 Kgs 8:65 and 2 Chr 7:8 (note the use of a double preposition). The site marked a traditional northern border of Israel, since these texts, along with 1 Chr 13:5, speak of Lebo-Hamath as a boundary in the Beqa' Valley. Modern Lebweh apparently marks the site's location (see fig. 10, location D).

Zedad. On the erroneous appearance of "Hamath" at the start of MT v. 16 (KJV, NET, Milgrom 2012, 234), see the immediately preceding Note *Through Lebo-Hamath.* Zedad (cf. Num 34:8) should probably be identified with the modern city of Sadad, 40 miles east of the Orontes River and 65 miles northeast of Damascus (see fig. 10, location E).

47:16. *Berothah.* Berothah is a site of uncertain location in the northern Transjordan. It is sometimes identified with modern Beirut on the coast; other commentators take it as identical to Berothai, modern Bereitan, which lies south of modern Baalbek, more than 15 miles south of modern Lebweh, in the Beqa' Valley of modern Lebanon. Neither of these identifications fits the present context well. It seems unlikely that Ezekiel would move so far south of his northern border to describe a new lower horizontal line. Thus, we should probably place Berothah (and Sibraim) farther north, somewhere on the border of Damascus and Hamath (where, in fact, v. 16 locates it; see fig. 10, location F). The general latitude of this border appears to be given in v. 17, which places it at the level of modern Qaryatein (see Note *Hazar-Enan* on 47:17).

Sibraim. The location of Sibraim is even more uncertain than that of Berothah. It also is stated to be on the border between Damascus and Hamath. See the discussion in the immediately preceding Note.

Damascus and Hamath. Damascus and Hamath are territories named for their central cities. Verse 17 locates the border between them at the general latitude of modern Qaryatein (see Note *Hazar-Enan* on 47:17; see fig. 10, locations H and G). Riblah (2 Kgs 23:33, 25:21) would appear to also lie near and slightly north of this border (fig. 10, location O).

Hazer-Hatticon. Hazer-Hatticon is of uncertain location but likely lies on the upper eastern border of the Hauran region (see fig. 10, location I). Ezekiel is now no longer describing a strictly *northern* border of the land but is outlining the extent of the land's reach in a generally northern direction from the perspective of an observer standing in the temple area where he is located. When he doubles back for a second swipe at describing the northern border in v. 17, he draws a more horizontal northern line.

Hauran. Hauran is the large plateau that extends east of the Sea of Galilee and is dominated by an elevated volcanic region known now as Jabal al-Druze. See the western portion of Ephraim's area in the tribal map, figure 10, location J. Tell-Qeni is the highest point of the region.

47:17. *Hazar-Enan.* Hazar-Enan, whose Hebrew name means "village of a spring," is likely modern Qaryatein, a modern site in a lush oasis. It lies in the upper right corner of the utopian land of Ezekiel 47 (see fig. 10, location K).

Lying farther north. For the locations of the regions of Damascus and Hamath, see Note *Damascus and Hamath* on 47:16. The Hebrew syntax here is difficult, employing the expression "and north northward." Removing one of the nouns "north" as due to dittography produces diction closer to more intelligible phrasing in 48:1, which refers to "Hazar-Enan, which is on the border of Damascus, with Hamath to the north."

47:18. *[Picks up].* Verse 16 had the "northern" boundary line turn south and proceed along the Holy Land's *eastern,* right-hand border. This line ended at Hazer-Hatticon, located near the line between the regions of Damascus and Hauran. (In suggesting the insertion of "Hazar-Enan" in v. 18, the *BHS* critical apparatus and RSV

appear to have confused Hazar-Enan and Hazer-Hatticon.) See Note *Hazer-Hatticon* on 47:16 and fig. 10, location I. Ezekiel's boundary description now picks up from that general area.

Between. HALOT suggests emending "from between" to "between" in all four cases of the phrase in v. 18. The MT's use of *mibbên,* however, can be understood as intending to trace two consecutive boundary segments, each extending *from* points lying *between* territories. That is, the boundary runs continuously south from points "between Hauran and Damascus and between Gilead and the land of Israel" (CEB; cf. GNT).

Gilead. The area of Gilead is east of the Jordan (see fig. 10, location L). As in Num 32:26, 29, "Gilead" seems to refer to the whole Transjordan (including the old area of Reuben to the south). Ezekiel follows the priestly delineation of Israel's boundaries (see Numbers 34) in leaving this Transjordan region out of the ideal boundaries of the Holy Land. See Image: https://goo.gl/FDxxky.

Forms the . . . boundary. The *BHS* critical apparatus, *HALOT,* and BDB all suggest emending the text to read *magbîl,* a *hiphil* participle meaning "setting the bounds." Compare the LXX ("the Jordan divides to the sea"), Syriac, and Vulgate.

Tamar. The reading is based on the LXX (which speaks of a "palm grove," the Hebrew meaning of "Tamar") and the Syriac. Tamar, just south of the Dead Sea (see fig. 10, location M), is where the boundary description picks up in v. 19 (cf. 48:28). The MT reads "You shall measure," instead of Tamar, conjuring an image of circumnavigating the land with a measuring implement like the line in 47:3. The NET conveys such a sense: "Between Gilead and the land of Israel will be the Jordan. You will measure from the [end of the northern] border to the eastern sea" (CEB and NJPS have similar readings). This alternative reading is possible, since Ezekiel's priestly source uses this sort of idiom of surveying, "You shall mark out your line" (Num 34:7–8, 10, using a different verb, *tāʾâ*).

47:19. *Meribath-kadesh.* Meribath-kadesh (Contention Kadesh), a geographical name reflecting HS tradition, is better known as Kadesh or Kadesh-barnea (Num 34:4), modern Ain Qadeis (see fig. 10, location N). Kadesh was where Israel quarreled with God and so became referred to as Meribah (Num 20:13 HS). The expression "waters of Meribah" (see also Ezek 48:28) comes directly from HS (Num 20:13, 24; 27:14).

[Along the] Wadi [of Egypt]. The Hebrew syntax is difficult, with no preposition to guide translation. Ezekiel 47, however, is reaffirming the traditional Egyptian border marked by the Wadi el-Arish, the "Brook of Egypt," a major geographical feature stretching 150 miles before reaching the Mediterranean about 50 miles south of Gaza. The expression "Wadi of Egypt" occurs in Assyrian texts of Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II describing military operations south of Gaza but outside of Egypt proper.

47:20. *Sets the boundary.* I am making the same emendation as described in the Note *Forms the . . . boundary* on 47:18.

Latitude of Lebo-Hamath. The Hebrew reads literally "up to [a point] opposite Lebo-Hamath." For the site's location, see Note *Through Lebo-Hamath* on 47:15.

47:21. *Allocate.* On the imperative force of the verb form, see *IBHS* 532–33, sec. 32.2.3.d (cf. NLT). The verb *ḥālaq* commonly uses *lĕ* to mark those receiving allocations.

47:22. *By lot.* As in 45:1, the Hebrew idiom does not require including the word "lot" (cf. Ezek 24:6 for the full expression). Interestingly, however, the LXX spells out the idiom: "You will divide it for yourselves by casting lots" (cf. 48:29 LXX).

As a perpetual heritage. The diction here echoes v. 14, rounding off Ezekiel's presentation of the ideal borders of the land.

[Allocate . . .] also. In the Hebrew, the first mention of resident aliens in v. 22 is part of the verse's initial clause. I have started a new paragraph, however, since the text essentially launches a new subtopic at this juncture.

Have [land] fall. I have repointed the verb as a *hiphil,* as suggested in the *BHS* critical apparatus.

47:23. *Utterance of the Sovereign* LORD. The utterance formula last appeared in 45:15. Here, it helps shape 47:13–23 as a coherent, weighty divine instruction.

Comments

Verse 13 begins a series of ordinances defining and allotting the Holy Land, a land revitalized through the power of the sacred river. The prophetic messenger formula, "Message from the Sovereign LORD," marks the transition. Just as ordinances for the temple, delivered with this formula (44:6, 45:18, 46:1), followed Ezekiel's tour of the sacred compound, so ordinances for the land follow his foray into the territory that the temple river transforms into an Edenic realm. Although specific land divisions follow in Ezekiel 48, the prophetic utterance formula in 47:23 marks 47:13–23 as an independent piece of divine instruction. The section establishes a theology of sharing the land.

The initial vocabulary of 47:13–23 immediately transports the reader back to early Israel and the tribal era. All twelve tribes are miraculously resurrected (47:13; cf. 37:15–28), even Simeon (see 48:24). Terms such as *gĕbûl* (territory), *nāḥal* (maintain as kin-group possession), *šēbeṭ* (tribe), and *ḥebel* (allotted piece of field) are familiar to us from biblical texts picturing what was remembered of premonarchic tribal modes of politics and economics. (For a book-length study of these early modes of Israelite social organization, see Cook 2004a.) The phrase "falls to you by lot as a perpetual heritage" in v. 14 is a rich metaphor drawing on the practice of divvying up arable land equitably by casting sacral lots. Such village-era diction has appeared before in the utopian vision. In line with the texts of its source material in HS, Ezekiel 40–48 critiques the Israelite monarchy and reemploys customs and terms remembered as characterizing Israel's premonarchic era (see, e.g., NOTES *Nasi* on 44:3, *Holding* on 45:5, *The people of the land* on 45:16, *Year of restoration* on 46:17).

Returning to the spirit of tribal Israel, Ezekiel hoped to reempower God's people on the local and individual levels. A major concern is a return to fairness and balance. Already in v. 14, the diction stresses just that. No sooner has the topic of the land come up then God declares, "You will each have a fair share of it" (NJB). The system of stepped, graded holiness in Ezekiel does not focus on supporting the self-interests of the priestly center, with Zadokite propaganda claiming an ideological victory over the periphery. Smith (1987, 68) is far off the mark in speaking of Ezekiel's land mapping as a "symmetrical model deriving from the perspective of dominance."

Here again, Ezekiel 40–48 is reversing past wrongs attendant to the rise of centralization and monarchy in preexilic Israel. Replacing Israel's king with a chieftain—

the *Nasi*—is only part of the program of reversal. The theology we saw undergirding 45:8–9 and 46:16–18 must now be fully implemented *cartographically.* Monarchic malfeasance and the land-grabbing of Jerusalem's nobles must no longer pervert God's entirely holy land by dissolving the tenure of lineages on their homesteads (e.g., Lev 19:35; 25:10, 23–24, 41, all HS). There must be no more erosion of Israel's traditional kin-plus-land units, which joined and nurtured all Israelites as God's covenant people.

Strikingly, the land's borders delineated in 47:13–23 do not represent the area that Israel traditionally occupied. Historically, Israel's geopolitical reach included extensive parts of the Transjordan, such as Gilead, occupied by Gad, Reuben, and one-half of the tribe of Manasseh. It excluded Philistia, Phoenicia, and the land of Syria. (See the Image referenced in Note *Gilead* on 47:18 [see Appendix].) Ezekiel 47, the reader concludes, is simply not interested in the land's historic occupation; rather, the text is following the priestly delineation of borders in Num 34:1–12. Numbers 34 specifically does *not* include the Jordan's east bank, historically home to Reuben, Gad, and half of Manasseh. (See Notes *Hethlon, Through Lebo-Hamath,* and *Zedad* on 47:15, *Gilead* and *Tamar* on 47:18, and *Meribath-kadesh* on 47:19.) (Rashi asserts that Ezekiel 47 strictly follows Numbers 34, but, in fact, there appear to be some minor differences between Ezekiel and P. See the Image referenced in Note *Gilead* on 47:18 [see Appendix].)

Why does Ezekiel 47 fail to claim the Transjordan for inclusion in the utopian land? The question hits home especially with the mention in v. 14 of God's solemn oath to the ancestors. In Gen 15:18–21, God promised Abraham maximal borders, including east bank areas. It is hard to imagine that some practical, contingent consideration is here preventing the utopia from claiming eastern zones. Little is off the table in a land where twelve tribes are resurrected and a cosmic river flows. Besides, in point of fact, some returnees from the Babylonian exile were very likely able to settle in the Transjordan.

One factor in the Zadokites' disavowal of the Transjordan region is surely their theological submission to authoritative, scriptural traditions. Ideology and self-interest are not the driving sources behind the Zadokites' work. Priestly texts are. Another consideration turns on how HS in Num 32:6, 13–15 is *particularly negative* about Gad and Reuben's proposal to occupy the Transjordan. Moses takes their proposal as reflecting cowardice and betrayal, and Ezekiel 47 may give voice to the same position.

As Ahn (2010, 228) notes, there were certainly third-generation Judeo-Babylonians not wanting to return home, to "cross the Jordan" so to speak. These exiles felt able to worship God in a new land and felt no compulsion to rebuild Yehud. They wished to remain YHWHists "across the Jordan," with Babylonia as their permanent home. I believe it likely that Ezekiel 47 echoes Moses's voice in HS, rebuffing these Judeo-Babylonians by specifically leaving the land of Gad and Reuben outside of the temple's holiness matrix.

Interestingly, Numbers Rabbah 7:8 and Ramban on Num 21:21 assert that, compared with the Cisjordan, the Jordan's east bank has no divine Presence. Assuming this as true, Tashbatz (Rabbi Simeon ben Zemah Duran, 1361–1444 CE) describes Transjordan Israel as possessing a relatively low level of sanctity. East of the Jordan, there is no cure for infertility, no prophecy, and no resurrection of the dead.

Verses 22–23 specifically single out "resident aliens who are living among you and who have had descendants born here" for generous provision within the land's new

utopian reconfiguration. Yet again, Ezekiel is highly influenced by the terms and values of HS Scripture. The Holiness School understands that foreigners who settle in God's land do not have kin and tribe to protect them and so come under the protection of the HS covenant and Israel, God's vassal people (Lev 19:33–34 HS). Earlier in Ezekiel, the prophet showed a tendency to place native Israelites and resident aliens on the same footing and to understand aliens' vulnerability (Ezek 14:7; 22:7, 29). The text now extends his convictions in this matter.

Ezekiel 47 pushes Israel to fulfill its covenantal commitment to protect resident aliens in the broadest manner possible. Heretofore, resident aliens, though sometimes able to accrue wealth (Lev 25:47), were ineligible to possess and bequeath hereditary land (see Olyan 2000, 73). Texts such as Lev 19:10, 23:22, and 25:6 (all HS), though requiring great care for aliens, confirm their generally landless status within Israel. According to the classical midrashic halakhah of Sifre to Numbers (26:55), "proselytes" were not originally included in the division of the land.

Milgrom (2012) thus rightly considers Ezek 47:22–23 to represent an extreme of inclusivity within the Bible, matched only by a few other texts, such as Isa 14:1. He considers that within the utopian vision, the resident alien essentially becomes an ethnic Israelite. Milgrom writes, "With this last barrier between the social status of the Israelite and the alien removed, total assimilation is probably envisioned" (246).

Anticipating Milgrom, Olyan (2000, 73) argues that our text "effectively eliminates all difference between him [the foreign resident outsider] and the native, fully assimilating him into the lineage and inheritance structure of the society." On the basis of the LXX of Ezek 47:13, 23, O'Hare (2010, 178–85) finds that the LXX translator aimed for an even greater inclusivity than what appears in the MT. In his translation, the LXX speaks of an unspecified allotment of land assigned to a new, entire "tribe of foreigners."

Though characteristically expansive, Ezekiel is following through on HS values and ideals, extending the trajectory of HS rhetoric. Thus, Exod 12:43–49 (HS) gives special consideration to all resident aliens who wish to join the congregation of Israel in celebrating the Passover. Verse 49 is downright emphatic about putting the alien and the Israelite on the same legal footing: "There shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you." Leviticus 19:33–34 (HS) goes beyond giving resident aliens legal rights to require Israel directly to love them: "The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God."

Classic premodern Jewish interpretation wrestled hard to come to terms with the radical inclusivity of Ezekiel 47. Abarbanel believes that converts who joined with and suffered alongside the exiles are in view and that Ezekiel considers them part of Israel in the utopian division of the land. The same view appears in Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) Rabbah 1:8. However, Sifre to Numbers 10:29 offers an opposite opinion, holding that the Torah permanently excludes converts from receiving any land shares within Israel's territory.

Like some traditional interpreters, many modern scholars will strain to accept the radical inclusivity of Ezek 47:22–23. They will insist that despite the present text, the temple vision remains xenophobic. The position is based largely on 44:6–9, which many modern readers deem exclusivist. Does not 44:9 specifically prohibit foreigners

from entering the sanctuary? Is Ezekiel 44 not fundamentally at odds with HS, which envisions aliens making offerings at the central temple in Lev 22:18 (HS)?

The language of Ezekiel 44 differs from that of Ezek 47:22–23 and Lev 22:18, and its primary concern (the Israelite priesthood) hardly bears on the assimilation of aliens into the Israelite community. Ezekiel 44 does not mention the resident outsider (*gēr*). Rather, its language, I have argued, stands in dialog with texts about whether the *zār* (outsider) and the *ben-nēkār* (foreigner) may engage in priestly service. (See the Comments on 44:4–31.) Ezekiel 44 is arguing only about who may enter the temple's inner courtyard, what Milgrom (2012) terms its "priestly platform" (see Note *Priestly zone* on 44:7; MacDonald 2015, 43). For Ezekiel, all foreigners, including resident aliens, are ineligible for admittance to the inner priestly terrace, but so too are all native Israelites outside Aaron's lineage.

There is no xenophobia in Ezek 44:4–31. Most translators and scholars have simply misunderstood that the text is following an HS usage in which *miqdāš* can have a narrow sense denoting restricted temple areas (Lev 16:33, 21:23; Num 18:1–3). The term is a synonym for *qōdeš* (see Note *Priestly terrace* on 44:27). Stevenson (1996, 63 n. 46) spots Milgrom's error in overlooking that *miqdāš* sometimes refers to the inner precincts.

Interestingly, Ezekiel was not the last Zadokite prophet to embrace a spirit of inclusivity. Following Ezekiel and pushing beyond his welcome of resident aliens who have fathered descendants, Zechariah welcomes both "[resident-alien] inhabitants of many cities" and even "peoples and strong nations" to seek God on the temple mount (Zech 8:20–23). Here, God's indwelling of the temple truly works to unite all humankind.

Tribal and Holy-District Allotments (48:1–29)

48 [1]These are the names of the tribes [of Israel] [and a listing of the bands of territory each is to receive]. At the northern frontier, Dan will have one portion [with a northern border] running along the Hethlon road to Lebo-Hamath, [and as far as] Hazar-Enan (on the [northern] border of Damascus, [that is,] toward the north beside Hamath). [Dan's strip of territory extends all the way across the land,] [from] the east side [to] the west. [2]Asher receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Dan, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [3]Naphtali receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Asher, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [4]Manasseh receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Naphtali, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [5]Ephraim receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Manasseh, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [6]Reuben receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Ephraim, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [7]Judah receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Reuben, from the east side [of the land] to the west.

[8]The reserve/Terumah tract that you will set apart, [as instructed earlier,] will lie along the [southern] boundary of Judah, from the east side [of the land] to the west, 8 ⅓ miles long [north to south] and in width equal to one of the [tribal] portions (from the east side [of the land] to the west), with the sanctuary in the middle of it.

[9][In the midst of this section shall be] the [consecrated] reserve/Terumah [proper] that you will set apart for the Lord. It will be 8 ⅓ miles wide [east to west] and 6 ⅔ miles long [north to south]. [10]The holy Terumah shall be apportioned as follows: the priests [i.e., all the sons of Aaron] receive an area 8 ⅓ miles [wide] on the northern side, 3 ⅓ miles long on the western side, 3 ⅓ miles long on the eastern side, and 8 ⅓ miles wide on the southern side, with the sanctuary of the Lord in the middle of it.

[11]As for the [specially] consecrated priests, those Zadokites who carefully performed my duties, who did not go astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the

Levites did, [12]they [the Zadokites] shall have [their own, individual] Terumah tract out of the [total holy] reserve of the land—a most holy tract—adjoining the area belonging to the Levites.

[13]The Levites [are also to have their own area,] alongside [and north of] the area of the priests. It is to be 8 ⅓ miles wide [east to west] and 3 ⅓ miles long [north to south]. All [these clerical tracts of land taken together] will measure 8 ⅓ miles in width and 6 ⅔ miles in length. [14]No part of [the holy reserve/Terumah]—the best part of the land—is ever to be sold or exchanged or transferred, because it is sacred to the LORD.

[15]The remainder [of the special reserve], 1 ⅔ miles in length and 8 ⅓ miles in width, is for common, nonconsecrated use. It shall belong to the [central] city, for lodging space and pastureland. The city itself is to be in the middle of it. [16][The city is a square with] these measurements: The north side will be 1 ½ miles, the south side 1 ½ miles, the east side 1 ½ miles, and the west side 1 ½ miles. [17]The city shall have open pastureland [surrounding it] extending 437 ½ feet [146 yards] to the north, 437 ½ feet to the south, 437 ½ feet to the east, and 437 ½ feet to the west. [18]As for the remainder of the strip contiguous to [and below] the holy reserve/Terumah, stretching 3 ⅓ miles to the east and 3 ⅓ miles to the west—the produce of these areas adjoining the holy reserve shall supply food to the city's workers. [19]The workers of the city, who come from all the tribes of Israel, shall cultivate it. [20]And so the entire reserve/Terumah [in the center of the strip between Judah and Benjamin], that is, the holy reserve together with the [central] city's holding of land, shall be 8 ⅓ miles by 8 ⅓ miles square.

[21]The areas that remain, to the right and to the left of the holy reserve and the city's holding of land, will belong to the ruling chieftain. Extending [eastward] from the reserve/Terumah, [in a strip that is] 8 ⅓ miles top to bottom, [all the way] to the [land's] eastern border and westward from the 8 ⅓-mile-long [western edge of the] reserve [all the way] to the western border [of Israel], it shall belong to the chieftain. The holy reserve and the sanctuary of the temple will be [right] in the middle of it [all]. [22][So too,] the Levites' holding and the city's holding of land lie between the chieftain's areas. [Exclusive of these holdings,] the chieftain possesses [everything] between the territories allotted to Judah and Benjamin.

[23]As for the remaining tribes, [which will be settling south of the lands of the temple, city, and chieftain,] Benjamin receives one portion [all along the southern boundary of the lands of the chieftain and the city], from the east side [of the land] to the west. [24]Simeon receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Benjamin, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [25]Issachar receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Simeon, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [26]Zebulun receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Issachar, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [27]Gad receives one portion [all] along the [southern] boundary of Zebulun, from the east side [of the land] to the west. [28]The [lower] border of Gad, on its southern side, [will run] from Tamar to the waters of Meribath-kadesh, [and then along the] Wadi [of Egypt] to the Great Sea. [29]This is the land that you shall have fall to yourselves by lot as a perpetual heritage for the tribes of Israel. These are their portions [of land]—utterance of the Sovereign LORD.

Notes

48:1. *[Bands of territory].* For a map of the tribal land allotments, which run horizontally across the land, see figure 10.

Running along. The MT text is unusual ("by the side of the way") and may be corrupt.

Hethlon. See Note *Hethlon* on 47:15, and figure 10, location C.

Lebo-Hamath. See Note *Through Lebo-Hamath* on 47:15, and figure 10, location D.

Hazar-Enan. See Note *Hazar-Enan* on 47:17, and figure 10, location K.

Damascus . . . Hamath. Damascus (see fig. 10, location H) and Hamath (see fig. 10, location G) are territories named for their central cities. Verse 1 (cf. 47:16–17) locates the border between them at the general latitude of Hazar-Enan, which is modern Qaryatein (see fig. 10, location K). Riblah (2 Kgs 23:33, 25:21) would appear to also lie near and slightly north of this border (see fig. 10, location O).

[Dan's strip]. The northernmost tribes are Dan, Asher, and Naphtali, the three northern tribes in the wilderness camp of HS (see Image: https://goo.gl/MhaJP4). The MT places mention of Dan at the very end of 48:1, where the text reads simply, "an east side [and] the west: to Dan, one part." The *BHS* critical apparatus suggests emending the cryptic Hebrew to align with the succeeding verses, where clearer syntax describes bands of territory extending from the land's east side to its west side. Thus v. 2 (NRSV) ends, "from the east side to the west, Asher, one portion."

[Extends . . . across]. The MT text is unusual ("and there shall be to him/it an east and west") and appears to be corrupt. See the immediately preceding Note.

48:4. *Manasseh.* As the text turns to Manasseh, it begins to engage the Rachel tribes: Manasseh, Ephraim, and Benjamin, the western cluster in the wilderness camp of HS. Ezekiel will array these tribes above and below the more central cluster of Levi, Judah, and Reuben. See Image: https://goo.gl/AUEmLU.

48:6. *Reuben.* As the text turns to Reuben, it begins to zero in on the most prominent tribes of the wilderness camp of HS: Levi, Judah, and Reuben. See the Image referenced in Note *[Dan's strip]* on 48:1 (see Appendix). According to HS, Levi's tents surround the shrine, Judah fronts its entrance, and Reuben is in the immediate right-hand position.

48:8. *[As instructed].* Ezekiel first described the consecrated reserve/Terumah in 45:1–9. For the term and its meaning within Ezekiel, see Note *Terumah* on 45:1. For the location of the holy district within the utopian land, and for its layout and dimensions, see figure 5. The dimension of 25,000 cubits, which v. 8 repeats from 45:1, 3, will be elaborated in 48:20, which explains that the "entire *tĕrûmâ*" is 25,000 cubits square—a thousand twenty-fives. For the symbolic import of the number twenty-five, see the Comments on 45:1–9.

[North to south]. The context makes clear that this is the north-south dimension, what most English readers today would call the "length." See also v. 9. The same use of Hebrew spatial terms occurs earlier in 45:1 (see Notes *Wide* and *6 ⅔ miles long* on 45:1).

48:9. *Terumah [proper].* Verse 9 describes the portion of the land's middle strip that includes neither the chieftain's lands nor the city and its flanking open areas. It is

called the "holy Terumah" in v. 10; in vv. 18, 20, and 21; and earlier in 45:6, 7. Verse 20 specifically distinguishes the "entire reserve" from the smaller "holy reserve." See figure 5, diagrams A and B.

6 ⅔ miles. The MT reads 10,000 cubits (3 ⅓ miles), but see the discussion in Note *6 ⅔ miles long* on 45:1. Several modern translations follow the MT (see NJPS, NIV, NJB, NET), but this reading is impossible to reconcile with the numbers given in vv. 10 and 13.

48:10. *As follows.* The verse actually begins in Hebrew with a "*lamed* of specification" (see the following Note *As for* on 48:11). Thus, the BBE begins v. 10 most literally: "And *for these,* that is the priests." The NABR similarly has, "The sacred tract will be given *to the following*" (cf. NJPS, NASB). "The following" refers to the clerical parties occupying the holy Terumah, namely, the Aaronide priests (v. 10), the specially consecrated Zadokite priests (vv. 11–12), and the Levites (v. 13).

In the middle. The wording echoes God's promise in HS to dwell in the middle of Israel: Exod 25:8; 29:45, 46; Lev 15:31; cf. Ezek 37:26, 28; 43:7, 9. The Hebrew does not require the sanctuary to be centered geometrically, although it is likely centered along the Terumah's horizontal axis (cf. the use of *tāwek* in Gen 15:10, Deut 3:16, Josh 12:2).

48:11. *As for.* The *lamed* that begins v. 11, like the one beginning v. 10, appears to be a "*lamed* of specification." The *BHS* critical apparatus, on the basis of the evidence of the LXX, suggests reading the same *lamed* of specification at the start of v. 13. This use of *lamed* indicates the distinct sphere to which a verb applies. Here, the verb at issue is *hāyâ* at the start of the next verse (v. 12). For discussion of this type of Hebrew syntax, see Williams and Beckman 2007, sec. 273a; and *GKC* sec. 119u (for examples, see Ezek 10:13, "As for the wheels, they were called in my hearing 'the wheelwork'"; 1 Sam 9:20, "As for your donkeys that were lost three days ago, give no further thought to them"; Ps 16:3, "As for the sacred spirits of the underworld, they are the noble ones" [my translation, cf. NJB]). As with v. 10, the BBE translation of Ezek 48:11–12 is most woodenly literal: "For the priests who have been made holy, those of the sons of Zadok . . . even for them will be the offering from the offering." I understand this phrase "offering from the offering" to be an especially distinctive Terumah tract apportioned out of the total holy reserve. Verse 10 has already described the general priestly portion of the holy Terumah, so vv. 11 and 12 serve no purpose if they are not about a Zadokite subportion—a "most holy tract" (v. 12).

Carefully performed . . . went astray. The same phraseology appears earlier in 44:15. Ezekiel here refers to the same archetypal incident of Levitical rebellion treated in Ezek 44:6–16 and Num 16–18 (HS).

48:12. *Most holy tract.* Most translations miss the likely sense of the Hebrew, that within the priests' section of the holy Terumah there is a "most holy" subsection assigned to the Zadokites. For this interpretation of the syntax, however, compare NJPS. Also see the GNT paraphrase: "[The Zadokites] are to have a special area next to the area belonging to the Levites, and it will be the holiest of all." See figure 5, location E.

48:13. *The Levites . . . [own area].* The *BHS* critical apparatus suggests reading a *lamed* of specification here based on the evidence of the LXX. On this syntax, see the discussion in Notes *As follows* on 48:10 and *As for* on 48:11.

Alongside [and north of]. The Hebrew does not specify whether the Levites' tract is south (GNT; Greenberg 1984, 202; Block 1998, 733, fig. 11; Tuell 2009, 339; Milgrom 2012, 252, fig. 20) or north (Keil 1876b, plate IV; Carley 1974, 299; Zimmerli 1983, 534–35, fig. 7; Levenson 1976, 120; Stevenson 1996, 35; Duguid 1999, 516; Joyce 2007a, 240) of the priestly tract. For arguments supporting the latter view, see the Comments.

8 ⅓ miles . . . 6 ⅔ miles. The last sentence of v. 13 repeats the content of v. 9, thus bracketing the section on apportioning the holy Terumah using an *inclusio.* As in v. 9, the MT states the length to be 10,000 cubits (3 ⅓ miles), a text error. See Note *6 ⅔ miles* on 48:9.

48:14. *Ever to be sold.* The text adopts HS at Lev 25:34 here, extending its sense to apply to all the clerical tracts of land within the utopian Terumah (see Keil 1876b, 374).

48:15. *The remainder.* According to v. 8 the full reserve is 8 ⅓ miles long north to south. As of v. 13, however, only 6 ⅔ miles of this total length are accounted for. Thus, there is a remaining tract that is 1 ⅔ miles long yet to be apportioned.

Nonconsecrated. The translation is paraphrastic here, to stress that the "profane" land (NABR) is specifically not "defiled" or ceremonially "unclean," but merely unconsecrated, "for the general use of the people" (GNT). It is "open to the public." The Hebrew term *ḥōl* (common) also has this sense in Ezek 22:26, 42:20, and 44:23.

The [central] city. This is not Jerusalem, which is never named in Ezekiel 40–48 (cf. 40:1), but is a new utopian public center separated from the temple. See Note *[Central] city* on 45:6 and figure 5, location F. For the implicit critique of Jerusalemite royal theology here, see the Comments. The city is described in detail in 48:30–35.

Pastureland. As mentioned in Note *Buffer* on 45:2, HS earlier uses the term to designate the pasturelands around certain towns given to the Levites for their perpetual use (Lev 25:34, Num 35:2–7). The idea of a "buffer zone" around a city or complex that appears in 45:2 will surface again below in 48:17 (see Note *Pastureland* on 48:17).

48:16. *[A square].* The translation is paraphrastic here, making plain what immediately becomes clear from the measurements supplied by the verse. The utopia's new central city is a square of "4,500 cubits" per side. If the Hebrew "long cubit" is 21 inches, as we have been assuming, then each side of the square is almost 1 ½ (1.49) miles long.

South side 1 ½ miles. The text displays an interesting dittography at this point, recognized by the Masoretes, who leave the second occurrence of *ḥāmēš* unpointed.

48:17. *Pastureland.* As in 48:15 the Hebrew term refers to pasturelands, but here it also has the sense of a buffer zone—a surrounding rim of open land. The idea appeared earlier in 45:2, which described a buffer of empty land 87 ½ feet wide around the temple complex. The rim here around the city is five times as wide. A buffer zone would be most relevant on the north side, keeping the city at arm's length from the holy Terumah.

48:18. *East . . . west.* See the sections labeled G ("open area") on either side of the city in figure 5.

Adjoining the holy reserve. The verse redundantly repeats the phrase "adjoining the holy reserve" twice. Although there may be dittography here, most English translations reflect the pleonastic syntax.

48:19. *Workers of the city.* My reading follows the simple syntax of the LXX, which reads "the workers of the city." The MT, as it stands, may have this meaning if the participle has a collective sense and the noun "city" is an adverbial accusative.

48:20. *[Between Judah and Benjamin].* The second half of v. 22 below introduces this clarification, which presupposes knowledge of Benjamin's new location not relayed until v. 23. I have added it here in brackets for the sake of clarity.

Holding. The term *ʾăḥuzzâ* is tribal diction of hereditary inheritance that Ezekiel draws from HS (e.g., Lev 14:34, 25:10). See Note *Holding* on 45:5.

Miles square. I am reading "square" with the *BHS* critical apparatus rather than the MT's "fourth."

48:21. *To the right and . . . left.* For the chieftain's lands, see 45:7 and figure 5, location D.

48:22. *Between.* The Hebrew reads "are in the midst," but this phrasing might mislead readers to imagine that the chieftain's lands are inclusive of the sacred areas and the city's territory.

48:23. *[All along the southern boundary].* I have added the bracketed material for clarity. Compare the NLT's paraphrase: "Benjamin's territory lies just south of the prince's lands, and it extends across the entire land of Israel from east to west." The wording is based on what is said of other tribes, such as Asher (v. 2) and Naphtali (v. 3).

48:28. *Southern side.* The Hebrew of the MT is pleonastic here, reading literally, "at the south side, southward" (cf. NJB, NASB, BBE).

Tamar. On the identity of the site, see Note *Tamar* on 47:18, and figure 10, location M.

Meribath-kadesh. On the identity of the site, see Note *Meribath-kadesh* on 47:19. The expression "waters of Meribah" (see also 48:28) comes directly from HS (Num 20:13, 24; 27:14).

Wadi [of Egypt]. On the wadi here, see Note *[Along the] Wadi [of Egypt]* on 47:19.

48:29. *Have fall to yourselves.* For the diction, see Note *By lot* on 47:22.

As a . . . heritage. Similar wordings at both 45:1 and 47:22 read "*as* a perpetual heritage," with *bet essentiae* rather than *min* (see BDB 88, *bet* 7. c). Notably, the LXX has the same wording here as in 47:22 with its *bet essentiae,* further supporting an emendation to *bet.*

Utterance. The prophetic utterance formula last appeared at 47:23, where it rounded off a section of ordinances concerning the land that began in 47:13. Here, the formula rounds off a second section of these ordinances, concerning the land's allotment.

Comments

Ezekiel 48:1–29 carefully, deliberately allots the Holy Land as specifically tribal patrimonies. The land's division among the tribes is fine-tuned and geometrically precise, but also geographically implausible. Realistic geopolitical borders do not run roughshod over all preceding history and tradition of inhabitation, over geological and environmental factors determining land fertility and value, and over all terrain features establishing natural boundaries, such as those specifically named in fixing the land's outer

perimeter (see 48:1, 28). "Norms of mimetic representation," Rosenberg (2000, 203) notes, do not "now prevail"; instead, we have "the audacious textuality of a broadly architectonic allegory."

Far from arbitrary, the geometrically idealized tribal land allotment of Ezekiel 48 is existentially and theologically purposeful. The text moves tribe-by-tribe, giving each one unique, permanent security and standing. Here again, the reader confronts the utopia's concern with precise mathematical and morphological observation and measurement. As Simon (2009, 414) notes, such focus on geometric detail and structural precision is a powerful weapon against trauma, chaos, and tendencies toward aggression. Ezekiel 48 represents a decisive defeat of chaotic disequilibrium and deathful existential threat.

The text, though architectonic in nature, continues to reckon with an actual land with both a history and a topography. As noted below, Ezekiel 48 retains Dan as the land's northernmost frontier and keeps the temple roughly at its traditional latitude. This position, close to the Dead Sea, allows the sacred stream of Ezekiel 47 to transform the land's historically arid regions. The utopia's east-west lines of tribal division, though artificial, allow many tribes access to roads, plains, and valleys running up and down the land, providing them gateways to access the temple. As Block (1998, 722) writes, the arrangement "facilitates intertribal exchange and access for all to the sacred *tĕrûmâ*."

Completely absent in Ezekiel 48 is any acceptance of the monarchic-era division of Israel into two separate kingdoms. Ezekiel's utopian allotment envisions the reunited kin of Israel organized genealogically as extended families, kin groups, and tribes. So too, there is nothing here of a central royal city of Zion engulfing the temple (Ezek 5:5–6; 11:3, 7, 11; 24:3, 6) or of the monarchy's system of administrative districts (1 Kgs 4:7–19). As an additional move tempering the Judean monarchy, vv. 7–8 move the entire tribe of Judah north of its former location, so that it, in effect, becomes a northern tribe.

As Levenson (1976, 112; cf. 118, 121–22) writes, the new tribe-based, acephalous allocation of the land is "a deliberate attempt to recreate the archaic period in Israel's history." It wipes away all memory of royal chauvinism, of the monarchic state's blurring of tribal divisions and powers. Zechariah 12:7 will later echo the theme that Jerusalem and David's dynasty must never again overshadow the countryside.

Beyond the obvious rationale for Judah's placement, the logic behind the positioning of the other tribes within the utopian land has largely eluded scholars (see Stevenson 1996, 82–83 nn. 7, 8). (For a map of the tribal land allotments, which run horizontally across the land as bands of territory, see figure 10.) Certainly, Ezekiel's arrangement of the tribes does not reflect any actual situation in Israel's history. As Levenson (1976, 116) perceives, "There never was a *status quo* for which this program could have been the rationalization." Indeed, as Rosenberg (1987, 203) puts it, "The land is allotted to the renewed tribes, but according to no known geographic or historical imperatives." Is there, instead, an *intertextual,* theological imperative here?

I want to defend the thesis that Ezekiel 48 is drawing directly on the ordering of the tribes about the wilderness tabernacle in the texts of HS. For several reasons, scholars have not fully developed this insight as I do here. The dating, since Wellhausen, of the P strand after Ezekiel has suggested that although Ezekiel 48 might be of help in explaining P's tabernacle and camp, the reverse does not hold. Also, critics have often

understood P's tabernacle as mostly a model of Jerusalem's temple and a blueprint for the postexilic "second" temple (see Carvalho 1992, 174). Such a stance does not encourage approaching the HS tabernacle as an ideal *textual* entity. It hampers accepting Numbers 2–3 as a *theological vision* that Ezekiel 48 would be eager to develop for the Zadokite utopia.

The Zadokites offer their ideal vision for tribal configuration around God's Presence in Numbers 2–3 (specifically, Num 2:1–34; 3:23, 29, 35). The text describes the position of the Israelite tribes in the wilderness camp and on the march through Sinai. (See the Image referenced in Note *[Dan's strip]* on 48:1 [see Appendix].) The relevance of Numbers 2 to Ezekiel 48 is instantly clear in comparing the three northernmost tribes in each text. In Num 2:25–31 these are Dan, Asher, and Naphtali; Ezek 48:1–3 places these tribes at the land's north.

In Ezekiel 48, the tribes are not arrayed around the tabernacle on its four sides as in Numbers 2 (HS) but are "stacked" vertically from north to south. Thus, the far northern area described in Ezek 48:1–3 is relatively distant from the temple sanctuary. Dan, as flag-bearing leader of the northern tribal triad in the HS camp (Num 2:25), might be expected to be lower, closer to the temple. As Milgrom (2012, 248) notes, however, the northernmost position given in Ezek 48:1 is a concession to historic reality (Judges 18).

There is a traditional logic in placing three sons of the servant girls Bilhah and Zilpah here at the northern frontier of the land, at a distance from the sacral center, rather than sons of Jacob's wives Rachel and Leah (see Levenson 1976, 117; Tuell 2009, 339). Dan and Naphtali are sons of Bilhah (Gen 30:3–8), and Asher is the son of Zilpah (Gen 30:12–13). Zilpah's other son, Gad (Gen 30:9–11), is placed at the other extreme of Ezekiel's land, at the bottom of the stack, in the far south (Ezek 48:27–28).

The HS arrangement in Numbers 2–3 gives pride of place to Levi, Reuben, and Judah, the senior sons of Leah. Judah, of course, is David's tribe, of great traditional eminence. Levi is entrusted with tabernacle service, and Reuben is the firstborn (Gen 29:32). (Numbers 16:1 directly attests to the centrality of Levi and Reuben in HS.) Levi directly encircles the tabernacle on three sides (Num 3:23, 29, 35). Judah and Reuben, as flag-bearing leaders of the eastern and southern tribal triads (Num 2:3, 10), front the tabernacle (Judah) and flank its right (Reuben). See Note *Reuben* on 48:6.

Reflecting the three tribes' prominence in Numbers 2–3, Ezekiel 48 clusters them in the middle of the land. Levi is placed within the Terumah, and Judah and Reuben lie atop it to the north, closely proximate to the sacred center (48:6–7, 13). Here again, the tribal arrangement of HS undergirds Ezekiel 48.

The tribal configuration of HS gives the tabernacle's western flank to the three Rachel tribes: to Ephraim and Manasseh, the two sons of Joseph, and to Benjamin, Joseph's younger brother. Since the tribes are stacked vertically in Ezekiel 48, the utopian configuration cannot directly mimic the pattern of Numbers 2. Ezekiel's temple has no western flank! Unable to directly map the HS position of the Rachel tribes onto the utopian land, Ezekiel 48 instead places them around the central cluster of Levi, Reuben, and Judah. The Joseph tribes are on top and Benjamin is below (see the Image referenced in Note *Manasseh* on 48:4 [see Appendix]).

With eight of Jacob's sons placed fittingly on the utopian map, it remained for the Ezekiel writers to situate Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, and Gad. Though placed at a

southern extreme from the temple complex, these tribes most directly benefit from the miracle river of Ezekiel 47. In this regard, their southern position is enviable indeed.

In Numbers 2, these final four tribes form the second and third members of two tribal triads: the triad headed by Reuben on the tabernacle's southern flank and the triad headed by Judah on the eastern flank. Ezekiel 48:24–28 places these last remaining tribes at the land's southern end (see fig. 10). Simeon comes first as the eldest of the group, and as the tribe that Num 2:12 names first (he comes right after Reuben, the southern triad's head).

Next comes Issachar and Zebulun. In Ezek 48:24–28, they come second and third, respectively, so that they lie directly underneath—that is, south of—Simeon. Their relative positions reflect both birth order and their sequence in Num 2:5, 7 (HS). In Numbers, they are listed after the eastern triad's flag-bearing tribe, Judah. As noted, Gad is last in the list of Ezekiel 48 and is the most southern (48:27–28). He is both a son of Zilpah and is named after Simeon in the HS listing of the tribes of the southern flank (Num 2:14).

In the midst of the stack of tribes of Ezekiel 48, there lies the band of land set aside for the chieftain and for the land's special reserve, the Terumah (48:8–22), which was introduced in 45:1–9 (see Note *Terumah* on 45:1 and fig. 5). The tribe of Levi occupies a significant place in the reserve/Terumah, but so do the chieftain and others. The Terumah is thus not a tribal band proper. The territory list (48:1–7, 23–29) and the Terumah text (48:8–22) may actually have originated as separate documents. Certainly, the latter notably pauses the literary flow of the former. Be that as it may, the text's holistic, canonical form, with its weighty "pause," now mirrors the utopian land's morphology. Like the text, the new land has a profoundly prominent, holy middle (Joyce 2007a, 240). As Block (1998, 725) writes, "literary and geographic centers coalesce."

Geographical reality intrudes into the geometrical idealism of Ezekiel 48 as the text bends to respect the rough latitude of the preexilic temple. Seven tribal strips lie north of the utopian temple, but only five lie to its south. Greenberg (1968, 64) rightly speaks of an allowance here for the old temple's "eccentric position" (see Tuell 2009, 344). (Duguid [1999, 544] thinks the new temple moves north, but this takes 47:14 too literally.)

According to 48:10, the Aaronide priests have their own living space in God's utopian land, an area that has the sacred temple complex lodged in its midst. Although most English translations miss it, 48:11–12 further elaborates on this priestly zone. The space, it turns out, contains a unique Zadokite living area (see fig. 5, location E). Since v. 10 already describes the general priestly portion of the holy Terumah, vv. 11–12 are purposeless if they are not about a Zadokite subportion.

The text introducing this Zadokite tract (vv. 11–12) is syntactically challenging, but it likely begins with a "*lamed* of specification," translated "as for" (see Note *As for* on 48:11). The most likely translation of this difficult section, then, is, "As for the [specially] consecrated priests, those Zadokites, . . . they shall have [their own] tract of land." Among modern translations, the NABR captures the sense of vv. 11–12 best: "The consecrated priests, the Zadokites, . . . shall have their own tract set apart."

An especially relevant parallel use of the preposition *lamed* occurs at Num 18:8 (HS), "As for all the holy gifts of the Israelites, I have given them to you." The Numbers passage, like Ezek 48:11–12, concerns priestly privileges and uses the language of

"Terumah." The syntax of the verse in Numbers may thus actually have been on the writers' minds (or at least of subconscious influence) as they penned vv. 11–12.

In my interpretation, which takes its lead from, but pushes beyond, the understanding of the NABR and NJPS translations, vv. 11–12 direct that the Zadokites, who are set apart for altar duties, "have [their own, individual] tract out of the [total holy] reserve of the land—a most holy tract." The preposition *min* (v. 12) indicates that the Zadokite tract is "taken out of" (NJB) the larger area of the holy Terumah.

At several points in interpreting Ezekiel 40–48, we have paused to notice the bifurcation of Israel's priests into Aaronides and Zadokites. The division first emerged clearly in the description of the two separate priestly chambers up in the inner courtyard in 40:44–46. As in Num 18:5, a Zadokite HS text, Ezek 40:44–46 similarly distinguishes priests assigned to altar duties and priests assigned to more general sanctuary duties. See the Comments on 40:28–46; see figure 2, locations K and L.

The text of vv. 11–12 gives little additional detail about the Zadokites' reserve other than that the tract borders on the Levites' area. The area is "most holy" (v. 11), probably because, as we infer from v. 10, it encompasses the temple complex. Though interpreters differ (see Note *Alongside [and north of]* on 48:13), it likely constitutes a central strip of the Terumah lying immediately south of the Levites' land, placing the temple in the center of the square Terumah. These last points, however, are not certain.

The main argument against placing the Zadokites in the middle of the Terumah is that Ezekiel 48 moves sequentially from north to south, and the Levites' area is described after the priests' area. Zimmerli (1983, 534) and Duguid (1999, 517 n. 4) observe, however, that the sequence of discussion may change in describing the Terumah. Here, the sequence may move, as Zimmerli puts it, "in accordance with the degree of sanctity" (534), from priestly areas, to Levitical ones, to those of the city.

Since the Terumah is a sacral centered square that orients the entire land and acts upon it *centrifugally* (Joyce [2007a, 240] speaks of a "diffusion" of the holy), motion in 48:8–22 likely moves from inside outward. Thus Duguid (1999, 517 n. 4) writes, "Given the importance of geometric center in the square design of Ezekiel's temple, it seems most probable that the temple is located at the geometric center of the sacred portion."

Verses 11–12, which carve out the unique, ultra-holy Zadokite tract of land within the holy Terumah, may be a gloss from a time of Zadokite self-assertion (consult Gese 1957, 112; Zimmerli 1983, 534). The wording of the verses is ambiguous enough that at periods of harmony between priests, the Zadokite privileges asserted here might be genially played down or even "overlooked" (as in English translations of these verses!).

Be that as it may, the text is certainly ambiguous as to the exact extent of the Zadokite tract. No specific dimension is given for its north-south length. This may be purposeful, allowing for the tract's length to expand or contract in accordance with the relative numbers of Aaronides and Zadokites present in the Terumah at any given time.

Verses 15–20 turn to the final, southern section of the Terumah allotted to the public. Ezekiel 45:6 had introduced this tract: "You will allot to the [land's central] city a holding of land 1 ⅔ miles long and 8 ⅓ miles wide adjacent to [and south of] the holy reserve/Terumah. It will be held in common by the whole House of Israel." The reader now learns that the city is a perfect square, 1 ½ miles on each side, lying in the middle of

the southern Terumah strip. It is surrounded by open pastureland extending out from its walls 146 yards on all four sides. Livestock grazing here provide the city with dairy products.

Verse 15 reminds us that the southern Terumah strip is neither a royal nor a priestly zone but is for all Israel's "common, nonconsecrated use." Verse 19 dictates that the strip's permanent residents, the workers, "come from all the tribes of Israel." The center of Ezekiel's utopian land thus remains open to and welcoming of all Israelites! The mention of lodging space along the width of the strip (v. 15) means space for pilgrims to camp on their annual visits to the temple for worship. The strip is also agricultural land, with fields to feed both the full-time farmers permanently residing in the city and all temple pilgrims. The resident farmers continually grow food to feed the flow of pilgrims.

The New Central City (48:30–35)

48 [30]These are the exits of the [central] city: On the north side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, [31]shall be gates of the city named for the tribes of Israel—on the north, three gates: one gate for Reuben, one gate for Judah, and one gate for Levi. [32]On the east side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, three gates: one gate for Joseph, one gate for Benjamin, and one gate for Dan. [33]On the south side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, three gates: one gate for Simeon, one gate for Issachar, and one gate for Zebulun. [34]On the west side, the length of which is measured at 1 ½ miles, three gates: one gate for Gad, one gate for Asher, and one gate for Naphtali. [35]The [city's] circumference is 6 miles. From [that] day on, the name of the city is YHWH Shammah, "The Lord is Just Over There."

Notes

48:30. *1 ½ miles.* Ezekiel 48:16 already identified the new city as a square of 4,500 cubits per side. As there, the expansive syntax, with each side stated to be 4,500 cubits, drives home the careful geometry. There is, however, no mathematical purity here, no inherent sanctity—that belongs to the temple alone. The figure 4,500 is evenly divisible by numbers such as twenty-five, twelve, four, and three, but always with some multiple of three or five remaining.

48:31. *Tribes of Israel.* The city has three gates flanking each side of the city, so that twelve Israelite tribes can be represented. See Image: https://goo.gl/WiPAmJ.

One gate for . . . The redundant sounding repetition of *ʾeḥād* (one) in the Hebrew mirrors the similar use of *ʾeḥād* in 48:1–7, 23–27. The syntax drives home the distributive justice and holistic harmony pervading the utopian configuration of Israel.

48:34. *Three gates.* I am reading this with the LXX and the Syriac; the MT reads "their gates three."

48:35. *6 miles.* In Ezekiel's units of measure, this is given as 18,000 cubits (MT). The number is a multiple of key symbolic figures, such as twenty-five, four, and three

(e.g., 18,000 = $3^2 \times 4^2 \times 5^3$), but not in any perfectly symmetrical fashion. The city's holiness is derivative, so ideally neat arithmetic is avoided.

Just Over There. Modern English translations wrongly ignore the locative *-h* (*IBHS* 185, sec. 10.5). For full discussion of the new city's name, see the Comments. For a similar sense of *šāmmâ* elsewhere in Scripture, pointing to a locale where someone or something might go but which remains spatially removed in the perspective of the speaker/narrator, see Gen 24:6, 8; 42:2; Ps 76:3 (MT 76:4); Isa 34:15; and Ezek 47:9.

Comments

The concluding passage of the utopian vision, 48:30–35, zeroes in on the land's new central city. Tuell (2009, 342) cogently argues that the text is part of Ezekiel's original visionary text, not a later expansion. The passage focuses on the city's perimeter length (6 miles in circumference) and on the number and names of the city gates, which are each assigned to one of the twelve tribes of Israel. Why these particular focal interests?

In the ancient world, describing a city's gates was a way of praising it. Thus, as Bodi (2009, 499) notes, a seventh-century BCE Babylonian text, *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi,* exalts Babylon by naming its many gates. Examples of gate names include "the Exalted Gate," "the Gate of Life," "the Abundance Gate," and "the Gate of Pure Water."

Another purpose in detailing the new city's many city gates (twelve!) is surely emphasizing a theme of universal inclusivity and unity, as asserted in the eighteenth-century commentary *Meṣudat David.* When Ezek 43:11 earlier emphasized "exits" and "entrances," the intent was teaching strictures nurturing increased respect for holiness and extreme caution. Here, the reader is again reassured that holiness is both "positive" and "negative." Although holiness must command respect, and enjoying its fiery potency requires great care, its potent blessings extend in a fully just and open manner, empowering the periphery (see Note *One gate for. . . .* on 48:31).

The emphasis on a great many gates offers a symbolic invitation to all people to find the city, an invitation to bask in holiness. Joyce (2007a, 241) is quite correct that Ezekiel is "both emphasizing the location of the holy, but also diffusing or spreading it."

The city has three gates flanking each side of the city, facing in all four cardinal directions (see Note *Tribes of Israel* on 48:31). As at several times before in Ezekiel 40–48, the reader encounters the highly symbolic numbers three and four together, adding up to twelve (see Comments on 41:5–15a). There are symbolic *threes,* meaning that transcendent holiness, ebbing from the temple to the north, is impacting the city. The city is also perfectly *four*-sided, meaning that purity and harmony bless and nourish it. Since the text takes such care to order the twelve tribal gates, interpreters have naturally puzzled over the logic behind the configuration. No simple interpretation is obvious.

As in the positioning of the tribal bands up and down the land, the HS vision of the configuration of the tribes in the wilderness is doubtless a major influence (see Numbers 2–3 and the Image referenced in Note *[Dan's strip]* on 48:1 [see Appendix]). True, in comparing texts, Ezek 48:30–35 appears in no way a carbon copy of Numbers 2–3. Upon reflection, however, a carbon copy is not at all what the reader should expect. In Ezekiel 40–48, God's shrine lies outside and north of the tribal gates of the

new city. In the wilderness, things were very different. There, the shrine formed the tribal array's epicenter. In Zadokite thinking, the tribes are rightly arranged differently depending on (1) the sacred center's relative position and (2) whether the tribes are stacked atop and under it (48:1–29) or arrayed about it (HS and 48:30–35).

Interpreting the logic behind the ordering of the gates begins with recognizing the primacy of the city's *north* side. The city's three northernmost tribal gates have pride of place, since they lie closest to the temple to their north (Duguid 1999, 546; see Note *Tribes of Israel* on 48:31). It is a great privilege for these tribes to have gates here. Thus, in 48:31 we find flanking the city's north the same tribes to which Numbers 2–3 gives the first-rank position: Levi, Reuben, and Judah (see Note *Reuben* on 48:6).

Levi, Reuben, and Judah are the leading sons of Leah (see Comments on 48:1–29). The gates of Leah's other sons, Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun, lie vertically across the city to the south. Although Levi did not receive one of the twelve tribal strips of land, here his tribe does receive a gate of honor. If Levi had no gate, his tribe, in blaring contrast to 48:10, 13, would be unrepresented in 48:30–35 (see Joyce 2007a, 240).

Moving clockwise to the right (a secondary place of honor), we have the three eastern gates: Joseph, Benjamin, and Dan. Joseph and Benjamin together represent the three Rachel tribes, whose tribal strips lie about the central cluster of bands occupied by Levi, Reuben, and Judah (see the Image referenced in Note *Manasseh* on 48:4 [see Appendix]). In the HS camp, they flank the tabernacle's rear (see the Image referenced in Note *[Dan's strip]* on 48:1 [see Appendix]). Because Levi has a city gate of his own, Joseph's two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, share a single gate. Otherwise, thirteen gates would be needed!

Dan's gate fills in the bottom, open slot on the utopian city's eastern side. As a son of Rachel's maidservant Bilhah, he is relegated to a side corner. In addition, Dan's gate sits diagonally across the city from the gate of his younger full brother, Naphtali. Horizontally across the city lie the gates of the sons of Zilpah, the other maidservant. These are the gates of Asher and Gad (see the Image referenced in Note *Tribes of Israel* on 48:31 [see Appendix]).

Still moving clockwise, turning now to the south of the city, we have the gates of Leah's sons Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun. They lie vertically across the city from Leah's senior children, Reuben, Judah, and Levi. Thus, they mirror their full brothers' gates, just as Dan mirrors Naphtali, the second son of Bilhah. Because of their relatively subordinate positions in the HS camp (Numbers 2), Ezek 48:24–28 had placed their bands of territory at the land's southern end. Correspondingly, here in 48:33 the gates of Simeon, Issachar, and Zebulun open southward toward their namesake strips of land south of the Terumah (see fig. 10; Block 1998, 737 n. 21).

Finally, on the city's left (i.e., its west) we have the gates of Gad, Asher, and Naphtali (48:34). All three are handmaids' sons and are thus named last in Ezekiel's list of gates. In the HS tabernacle layout, these tribes lie to the outer south and north of the encampment. Gad is to the far south in both Num 2:14 and Ezek 48:34. It is thus fitting that his gate lies horizontally across from Dan's gate in the new city, since Dan's strip of tribal territory lies at the new land's northern extreme. North of Gad's gate lies the gate of his full brother, Asher, as well as the gate of Naphtali. Correspondingly, Asher and Naphtali lie at the north end of the HS tabernacle encampment.

It is notable that *west* has become the least favored direction in the utopian city (see Duguid 1999, 546 n. 14; Levenson 1976, 121). In the temple complex, lying above the city, there are no western gate towers at all, neither outer nor inner gateways. (This differs markedly from the later Qumran Temple Scroll; see Zimmerli 1983, 381, and Carvalho 1992, 156.) The presentation of west as disfavored likely relates to its associations with the chaotic western sea (*pĕʾat-yāmmâ,* Ezek 48:34; *derek-hayyām,* Ezek 41:12; Yamm in the Baal cycle). One may recall Baal's refusal in Ugaritic myth to have windows constructed in his royal palace out of continuing concern about Yamm, his enemy.

In the final and concluding verse of Ezekiel 40–48, the name "YHWH Shammah" appears as the new city's special designation (48:35). As argued by Soo J. Kim (2014), the name has a deictic ring, pointing in the Lord's direction from a position spatially removed from the Lord. "YHWH is *there*"—that is, *not here.* This stance of distance from the Lord would fit the perspective of Ezekiel's compatriots. The Presence is distant from their own position in Babylonia, exiled from God's land (Ezek 11:18, 40:1). The text, however, nowhere specifies a perspective outside the homeland for interpreting 48:35. Instead, Ezekiel 48 offers a perspectival context of the Israelite tribes back in their land. Verses 30–35 zero in on the city itself. Spoken *within* the city, the name YHWH Shammah conveys the truth that God is elsewhere rather than inside it. Ezekiel 43:1–13 clarifies the deixis, leaving no doubt that YHWH is in the temple building, not in the city.

The informed reader hears echoes in 48:35 of contrasting prophetic texts that also give the new city theophoric names but envision a restoration of the monarchy and the Presence in the city. Jeremiah 33:14–18 renames Jerusalem "The Lord is our Righteousness" and foresees an ideal king, the "Branch," reigning there, executing justice and righteousness on earth. Jeremiah 23:5–6 gives the same new name to the Davidic ruler himself. Jeremiah 3:17 calls Jerusalem "the throne of the Lord" in a context describing an advent of God's presence there that renders icons such as the ark of the covenant irrelevant (v. 16). Isaiah 60:14 glorifies the eschatological Jerusalem as "the City of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One"; the preceding verse (v. 13) declares that the Lord's feet rest there (cf. Ps 132:7). Verse 21 of the same chapter ascribes the royal motifs of Isaiah 11 to the new Jerusalem's inhabitants. Isaiah 62:2–4 names Zion "Hephzibah/My Delight Is in Her" (cf. v. 12), because God lavishes Jerusalem with all the enthusiastic attention of a new husband, and the city becomes a faithful bride (cf. Isa 1:26). Finally, Zech 8:3 calls Jerusalem "the faithful city," "the holy mountain," and describes God's tangible return to dwell in its midst. All of these texts stand in tension with the rhetoric of Ezek 48:35.

The adverb "there" within the city's name is spelled specifically as *šāmmâ.* There is a locative *-h* present (48:25). The *h*-ending stands out; it is not a morphological necessity. A name using the simple adverb *šām,* without a locative *-h,* appears in Isa 34:12, where Edom receives the new name "No Kingdom There" (*šām*) (see NRSV, CEB, NJPS). The extra syllable that the *mâ*-ending adds to YHWH Shammah bolsters the wordplay on Yerushalayim (the older name of the city). Something more significant than paronomasia, however, is likely at play. With the locative *-h* added, the deictic connotation of the city name takes on an especially dynamic force: "the Lord is *thither.*"

When used in texts such as Gen 19:20, 22; 21:13; and Jer 18:2, the Hebrew *šāmmâ* points to a place one anticipates visiting, a destination. The name of Ezekiel's city thus suggests it is the rendezvous point for those actively questing the Presence. The Lord whom you seek is "that-a-way"—the city is a key waypoint or port of call for pilgrims seeking to draw near to God. Soo Kim (2014, 193) writes that the city "should provide various conveniences, not only to provide materials used by the Temple, but also to provide for the needs of pilgrims, including inns, markets, restaurants" (here, also see Berquist 2007).

More significant, even upon pilgrims' arrival at the gates of the new city, the Lord will still remain *thither,* beyond the city. In other words, those within the city's walls will themselves still confess "YHWH Shammah," pointing up and north (see the Image referenced in Note *Tribes of Israel* on 48:31 [see Appendix]; the city lies south of the temple complex, lower on the mountain's slope). Having rejected metropolitan life and moved to a holy dwelling, the Presence is resident in another locale. It rests within the massive fortifications of the temple compound, set amid the large area to the city's north known as the "holy Terumah."

Together with the "holy portion" of land containing the temple complex, the city's strip forms a square central district—a Terumah broadly conceived (see fig. 5, diagram B). Here in the south of the square, pilgrims camp within a liminal realm. As Soo Kim (2014, 193) states, "The City is a transitional space from the holy place to the common world and vice versa." Again, Kim writes, "The City in Ezekiel's Vision Report helps its pilgrims by acting as a gate to the holy presence" (205).

According to Gen 43:30, the patriarch Joseph entered a private room, not far from his brothers, and "there [*šāmmâ*] he wept" (Gen 43:30 NJB). The brothers are excluded from the chamber—in their perspective, it is "thither." Just so in Ezek 48:35 God's Presence has dynamically taken up position "just over there," not far from the new city. From "up there" in the temple compound God's holiness radiates out to the city, whose occupants hesitate to approach closer without extreme caution, and out to all the land.

If God were to directly contact the pilgrim city, it would cease to exist, since direct contact with the Holy is lethal. Thus, God hovers over the city, "touching yet not touching." Here in a nutshell is the compelling paradox of Zadokite theology, of God touching yet not touching God's creation. There must be a delicate balance between revelation and withdrawal, between immanence and transcendence, between the symbolism of four and the symbolism of three.

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Appendix
Online Images

Readers might also be interested in accessing the following images, which I have placed online and are referred to in the text. The URLs have been shortened for maximal convenience, but care must be taken to type the URLs accurately, paying attention to case sensitivity.

Ezek 40:3. *Cord . . . stick.*	Investiture scene, Ur-Nammu stela	https://goo.gl/sRcn8K
Ezek 40:6. *Front steps.*	Outer east gate tower	https://goo.gl/LQ7LGZ
Ezek 40:9. *Jamb-posts.*	Temple compound porches	https://goo.gl/NhUfeo
Ezek 40:14. *Height of the porch's pilasters.*	Temple compound	https://goo.gl/mvMVq9
	Pilasters with palm tree ornamentation	https://goo.gl/vcVooD
Ezek 40:16. *Windows.*	Lattice window relief, ʿAin Dara	https://goo.gl/CbKWqZ
	"Woman in a Window" ivory	https://goo.gl/8pEB29
Ezek 40:38. *Annex.*	Annex for washing offerings and sacristy entrance	https://goo.gl/vqgxb3
Ezek 40:38. *[Northern inner] gatehouse.*	Preexilic temple and palace locales	https://goo.gl/LgzsAj
Ezek 40:47. *Yard.*	The temple's centered square pattern	https://goo.gl/UH3caF
	The great squares of the priestly platform	https://goo.gl/NvSFvc
Ezek 40:49. *Column on each side.*	Leonine column bases, Tell Tayinat	https://goo.gl/UjnS9q
Ezek 41:5. *[Annex of side chambers].*	Shrine model, Khirbet Qeiyafa	https://goo.gl/x66HuH

Ezek 41:5. *7 feet wide.*	Temple annex of side chambers	https://goo.gl/bZpwAt
Ezek 42:2. *Façade.*	North sacristy area	https://goo.gl/Q7RZYa
Ezek 47:1. *Southern side.*	Precipitation map, Judean desert region	https://goo.gl/qZ2AHM
Ezek 47:18. *Gilead.*	The scope of the land, three perspectives	https://goo.gl/FDxxky
Ezek 48:1. *[Dan's strip].*	The wilderness camp in HS	https://goo.gl/MhaJP4
Ezek 48:4. *Manasseh.*	The western tribes of the wilderness camp	https://goo.gl/AUEmLU
Ezek 48:31. *Tribes of Israel.*	The central city, south of the temple	https://goo.gl/WiPAmJ

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